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A PRETTY PRESENT FOR A MUSICAL FRIEND.

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FROM CHAUCER TO TENNYSON,

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MUSIC AND THE PIANO

BY

MADAME VIARD-LOUIS

OF THE GUILDHALL SCHOOL OF MUSIC

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

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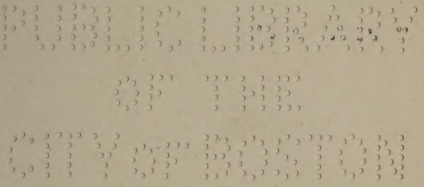

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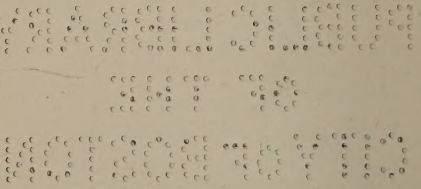

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Fille de la douleur, Harmonie, Harmonie,
Langue que pour l'amour inventa le génie,
Qui nous vins d'Italie et qui lui vins des cieux ;
Douce langue du cœur, la seule où la Pensée,
Cette vierge craintive et d'une ombre offensée,
Passe en gardant son voile et sans craindre les yeux ;
Qui sait ce qu'un enfant peut entendre et peut dire
Dans tes soupirs divins nés de l'air qu'il respire
Tristes comme son cœur et doux comme sa voix :
On surprend un regard, une larme qui coule,
Le reste est un mystère, ignoré de la foule
Comme celui des flots de la nuit et des bois.

A. DE MUSSET.

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INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE long observed, among the greater number of those persons who occupy themselves with Music, the astonishing indifference they manifest for what I may call the vital principle of this art—I mean for the thought by which the great composers were inspired. For my part, I, who believe in Music as a language, cannot understand this neglect; and yet it is too true, and we see it every day, that a vast number of people play upon some instrument or other, absolutely as if the producing a noise, which is accepted as a pleasant one, were all that is desired—whilst probably they are following also a lucrative career.

There are indeed three sorts of foes the

musical art has to combat, the one as formidable as the others.

There are those who have no suspicion that any meaning whatever is to be found in the notes, and who quite innocently play every kind of music in the same way. They think C is always C, whether in Beethoven, Mozart, or Chopin,—*f* and *p* are always *f* and *p*,—and thanks to this conviction, they make every musical instrument they touch into a noisy piece of machinery. Then there are those who desire to make themselves a name,—to have a reputation, and who labour for long years to attain an unrivalled proficiency in gymnastics,—who do not perceive that they confound the means with the end—the marble with the statue. And then there are those who imagine themselves 'highly gifted,'—thrust their own individuality into everything they perform.

Of these three classes of performers, the first appears to me to resemble an actor who should recite his part in the 'Merry Wives of Windsor' in the tragic tones that should belong to 'Richard III.,' and *vice versa*. The

second, to a person who thinks himself a poet, and deserving of universal admiration, because he can repeat, *verbatim*, all the rules of the grammar, and has learnt the whole dictionary by heart! (decidedly a strange thing to do!) The third class may be likened to a painter, who, copying a Madonna, by Raffaelle, distorts the features, under the pretence that he himself prefers them thus.

It is very certain, that in any Art but that of Music, we should consider the perpetrators of like eccentricities fit only for the lunatic asylum; but in Music every thing is allowable; and every wild weed may grow in this holy ground, unheeded!

And yet—what is there in all the world so elevating, and at the same time so near to our souls,—what more heavenly or more touching, more tender or more powerful than Music? What a universal life is it,—Harmony and Melody surround us from the stars above in their combinations, to the insect humming about us. And, in the human mind, those vibrations that are beyond the rude expression of speech, those that are the

finest and the most profound of our nature, and like it, are of highest complexity, and which define our individuality,—that depth in each of us which the Creator alone can sound, Music reveals—Music alone gives expression to all these intricate delicacies of the soul, which can give forth its perfume, only by means of this magic power.

We should therefore approach the Great Composers with reverence, such as when we draw near to a temple, and listen attentively to what these inspired ones have to tell us,—these spirits of the elect, who, like the prophets for the people of Israel, speak for us all, because they have felt more intensely than ourselves.

And, if we would worthily repeat to others what these have had to say, we must begin by forgetting ourselves, by informing ourselves what those grand minds have thought, by living their life, and suffering, or loving, or rejoicing in sympathy with them. It is in this sense we realise the famous maxim, '*Comprendre c'est égaler.*' Not that the performer, however excellent, can be thought

for a moment to equal the creating genius, but he represents the thought of the genius, and is aggrandised by his greatness.

It is evident, from what I have said, that the mechanical part of performance can never be too complete, for, to be able to pass from one composer to another without difficulty, giving the character of each, to have certainty in fingering, precision of touch, and facility in giving the diverse shades of meaning, and in the spirit of each master, without preoccupation about the means, demands a suppleness and agility of execution very difficult to attain.

At the same time, those to whom it is impossible to devote the long hours that would be necessary all through life, for great execution, are not excluded from being able to do something real in the art; for even a simple page of music may give pleasure to the intelligent listener, if it convey to him an idea.

In England, young people's studies are so frequently interrupted by travelling about, change of air, holidays, etc., that it is difficult for a teacher to carry the pupil far in the

more elevated questions. On the other hand, it is distressing to see sensitive and intelligent natures quite strangers to the artistic view of the subject.

I had long been seeking some remedy for all this, and decided on lectures, illustrated by performances, which would exemplify, in an agreeable manner, the varieties of thought, also the manner of rendering these, in the many different composers.

The success of the lectures led to the proposal on the part of some friends, that the ideas I had expressed in them might be rendered further useful by publication. They are therefore reproduced in the following pages in a somewhat altered form.

In this our epoch, in every respect a truly remarkable one, it is important to take note of the somewhat violent modification, almost transformation, that music has latterly undergone; the causes of which concern us nearly, in that they belong entirely to the general course followed by the minds of men.

This being so, it is evident, whatever may

be said to the contrary by the exaggeration of prejudice, that the art of music has been forced quite irresistibly in the direction it has taken.

And to advance the hour of a just appreciation of these facts,—to prevent, if possible, many well-meaning persons from also falling into exaggeration (whereby intelligence is destroyed), and our being inundated with worthless compositions, I think it is the duty of all true artists to bring forward sensible and just considerations to the notice of the public. We should be as the lamps that point out to the traveller the perils of his road.

For these reasons I have endeavoured here, clearly but concisely—as in describing classical music and modern music—to indicate the distinctive characteristics of each school.

The work is divided into three parts :—

1*st*. General History of the Art of Music ;

2*d*. Personal History of the Principal Composers for the Piano ;

3*d*. Advice on Style and Execution,—

in the hope that these divisions will assist the reader to understand my idea.

The work might have been greatly enlarged, but for the consideration that, in the form of a slight sketch such as this, it would be more generally acceptable, and more likely, by leading the mind to these high and important questions, and by indicating the path to be followed in their study, to carry out the object I have so deeply at heart.

JENNY VIARD-LOUIS.

LONDON,
March 1884.

MUSIC AND THE PIANO.

PART I.

General History of the Art of Music.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF MUSIC.

MY object in writing is to call the attention of all those who take an interest in Music, to what I shall call 'musical style,' which I may define as the stamp which every composer impresses upon his own work.

This stamp is, in my opinion, the soul of music. I look upon music as the language which, as has been said, 'begins where speech ends,' and those only do I consider worthy the name of master in the art, who have possessed emotions too powerful to find expression in any other language.

Buffon has said, 'the style is the man;' we may adapt this axiom to our subject and say in music, 'the style is the composer.'

Each of these choice spirits, whose feelings and aspirations could be expressed only in music, has had his own manner of feeling, of thinking, and thence also of writing in music—thus each has his individual musical style. Further, each of these, with few exceptions, has felt and said some special thing.

To be a literary or a musical genius, it suffices to excel in one line, in the domain of intelligence and of feeling. And this is true of all the arts. Among the great masters, therefore, we find that some, such as Homer, Dante, Shakspere, or Beethoven, give forth their songs for all humanity, and their genius being universal, they vibrate to every sentiment, whilst their greatness deifies, so to speak, these emotions. Some, such as Michael Angelo and Bach, have the quality of grandeur; and others, like Raphael and Mozart, of grace, of feminine softness and delicacy—they are gay and smiling also, or they are tender and move us to tears that are quickly dried. The genius of others, such as Haydn, is so fine, so pliant, and sparkling, we listen as we should to a sprightly conversation. Some have the pastoral sentiment, some again are declaimers, while others are only lively and amusing. In short,

every shape and every shade of feeling in the human soul has its representative, and in giving expression to his conceptions of these, each representative has his individual style.

But the composer dies, and leaves only *notes* behind him—characters merely—a sealed book to most men.

Some, however, then come forward with the desire to recall to life these notes, to give a meaning, a soul, to these dumb signs, and such people are the interpreters of the art. And it is a noble thought, for it is well and right to repeat the songs of these great spirits, just as it is well and right to give voice to the heroic words of our poets.

Unfortunately, however, but too often this intention is not realised ; instead of succeeding, only a gymnastic effort is performed ; for in our days it is considered that to be a musician is to be only an acrobat !

It is this fatal idea that I desire to combat. No ! the musician need not be an acrobat.

Doubtless it is absolutely necessary that the mechanical part of the execution should be as perfect as possible, just as it is indispensable to have good tools for any labour whatever, in order that one may not be impeded in the expression of one's thought ; but the mechanical side, far from being the principal aim in view, should be so thoroughly

complete, that it might even be *forgotten* in the performance.

The vocation of our great musical composers, like that of our poets, has been to give expression both to joy and (more often) to sadness; and, therefore, if one would assume the mission of the interpreter, one ought to be acquainted with their lives, thus to know their manner of thought and to feel as they have felt, and therefore to be able to sing as they have sung, without taking thought of the right hand or the left.

The old classical composers and the modern composers felt and wrote very differently, even as their natures differed and the times in which they lived.

For music is so thoroughly a language that it reproduces with exactness the various social phases that men have passed through; and one might rewrite the history of philosophy, during the last three centuries, as well as during our own, only by studying the signification of the various forms presented by music throughout the period.

I therefore propose in these pages to relate the life of music from its beginning, to follow its development and seek out the particular style of each period, examining the special character of each composer and his influence on his epoch. In this way becoming impregnated with the senti-

ments of each poet we shall be able to give a voice to his utterances.

With the first advent of man into the world, music was born. From the moment that our earliest parents desired to address their Creator, speech appeared to them inadequate, and they *sang* His praises. Music, therefore, is a necessity to human nature so soon as the emotions have been aroused. But for a long time men sang as birds sing, without rules, without any appreciable scale. By degrees the necessity of finding some means by which the prayers employed in the services of religion might be transmitted to posterity, led to a system of notation being invented; but nothing remains to us from these early times. We have but a very imperfect knowledge even of the Greek scale.

Yet music was one of the subjects of study in the schools of philosophy. Pythagoras declared it to be the result of the perfect relation of numbers, which he considered the 'soul of the universe.' Plato and Aristotle coincided in his theories on the subject of music, and accorded to it a moral influence of such high importance, that no person who was incapable of improvisation could pretend to the name of philosopher.

It is probable, from the few data that we possess, that the Greek 'modes' or scales were very

numerous, somewhat in the same sense as if we were to give the name of 'mode' to every scale commencing on each step of the diatonic scale. Centuries elapsed before the idea occurred of forming a system by the union of sequences of fifths given by immediate vibration corresponding to the first note given by some metal when struck.

Music still remained within very restricted limits, owing to the difficulty of finding *corresponding* sounds. In fact, by the sequence of fifths they had a succession regular as to distance, but exceeding the octave, and consequently hindering all production of harmony. I mean by harmony a concordance of sounds agreeing together in combination, and which can be produced in an indefinite sequence. After many experiments they at length discovered what they called 'temperament;' that is to say, by lessening a little the distance of the perfect fifth, and by making on it one still more restricted, to which they gave the name 'diminished,' they would attain to the octave, a perfect unison with the note from which they started. From that time primitive harmony was possible, and instruments could be made to agree in tune.

It is known that the seven Italian names of the notes (do, re, mi, fa, etc.) were given by Guido

d'Arezzo* after the first syllables of the seven first verses of the Hymn of St John the Baptist.

Ut queant laxis
Resonare fibris
Mira gestorum
Famuli tuorum,
Solve pollute
Labii reatum
Sancte Joannes.

(The syllable *ut* being afterwards changed to *do*, as more suitable for a vocal sound, and *sancte* to *si* for the same reason.)

The invention of the scale was for a long time attributed to Guido, who lived in the end of the tenth century, but in reality nothing certain is known on the subject. The scale was indeed the work of the whole world of learning.

They had thus a scale which is strange enough, since it only has twelve semitones, although by following the natural key of the seven sharps and of the seven flats we ought to have fifteen. But it was impossible to establish fifteen semitones and to reach the octave—much in the same way as the most learned men have failed, in spite of all their calculations, to make a perfect year. Six hours remain over, and we are obliged every four

* Guy of Aresso was a Benedictine monk of the Abbey of Pomposa, in the Duchy of Ferrara. He used the names of the notes as given above, only as a *memoria technica*.

years to have a leap-year, which readjusts the system. In nearly all the laws of Nature there is some point which is beyond our reckoning.

Another 'temperament' was also adopted. By dividing the tones by the smallest interval which could be found on the strings, they obtained nine divisions, which they called *commas.* The whole tone was then divided into two half tones, one called diatonic semitone—changing its name as C—D flat, and the other called chromatic, as C—C sharp. The diatonic semitone was composed of four commas, the chromatic of five. But if they had retained these divisions, it would have been impossible to play on instruments. They therefore decided to have one single note for both the flat and the sharp, depending on the natural instinct to supplement the deficiency. The legislators of music were right in relying on this instinct, for it is a curious fact that voices are soon wearied by singing in a key with sharps, and relieve themselves by singing flat. It has been ascertained by long experience that a piece in D natural major strains the vocal organs much more than the same piece in E flat major. It is evident that we have therefore a false scale, from a scientific point of view, and it is just its imperfection which makes it human.

As soon as the diminished fifth was invented,

a new sphere was given for the expression of human feeling—music left its algebraic prison-house for the radiant domain of poetry. The inversion of this diminished fifth forms the famous tritone or succession of three whole tones; and this roughness, this discord which terrified mere speculators and caused floods of ink to flow in its attack or defence, contained the germ of all the feeling, all the charm and variety, as well as of all the passion of which the sublime Art has been the interpreter.

In a slight sketch such as this I am obliged to leave many points not touched upon, especially as this is not purely a scientific work. My chief aim is to record what labours and what efforts the art of *tonality* has cost the human mind, and when at length discussions were allayed, with what a cry of triumph men beheld opening out before them the limitless regions to which the power of modulation would lead on.

Thus music had at length taken a form that the human mind could comprehend, and that the imagination could develop in its own way, and, in consequence, in a short time men of genius became abundant, who, aware that they would be labouring on fruitful soil, set themselves to the work of making laws and regulations for the employment of modulation, and even brought logic to bear upon

their subject, as much as the philosophers themselves in their deductions.

Modulation was not to be used from one key to another, unless the same notes existed in both keys. A given passage of a certain form could not occur, except the passage were repeated at a specified interval (much as a pair of vases are placed on a chimney-piece at relative distances, proportioned to the space); a discord could not be had, unless it was 'prepared' and 'resolved' by two concords, being thus, as it were, guarded like a thief between two policemen.

I should weary the reader were I to enumerate all the things that could *not* be done, for the prohibitions were numerous. It seemed as if people were afraid of the muse who had newly appeared among them, and therefore bound her down and imprisoned her as much as possible.

The reason of this is quite logical. In those distant times, which were pervaded by the spirit of strife and battle, and also by strong religious feeling, it was not possible for music to be known and studied except by the scholar or the monk, and those who lived within their influence. Under such conditions human passion is deadened or silenced, and the mind is entirely given up to ingenious combinations.

The only solo instruments of those days were

the organ, the violin, and, later, the harpsichord. Over all the organ grandly dominated, but its tones, so pure, strong, rich, full, and, above all, so calm, could speak only of the Almighty, at whose feet all the storms of earth are lulled to rest. The violin, without the rules of harmony, might elaborate the most complicated passages, but as it could not be accompanied, *it failed to speak.* The harpsichord, possessing no force, could be nothing more than an amusing plaything!

Music, moreover, still showed traces of her first parentage. In these days, when we hear so much of the influence of heredity, one might say that music, the daughter of natural science, forthwith developed mathematical aspirations. The Fugue appears; she bears the compasses (for exact measurement), sober, grand and severe in aspect: and, lo! the whole dynasty of the early composers follow in imposing procession.

But music has yet another progenitor. If, under the name of Harmony, she rules the whole universe, and is, as such, purely scientific, she is also for us the expression of our highest emotional feelings, and then she assumes a form altogether imaginative (poetic). Side by side then with the didactic soon Sentiment took up its place.

In the sixteenth century, the improvement of instruments became the next necessary step; they

were now brought to perfection. In addition to the masses, the vespers, the motetts, appeared numerous small sonatas for the harpsichord, for violin and harpsichord, or violin and bass viol. It was not, however, till the eighteenth century that the scope of music was greatly extended.

I am speaking of instrumental music, for, from the seventeenth century, the great schools of Italy had produced vocalists of the highest merit, and the opera, successfully cultivated in that country, had been largely developed in France by Lulli and his successors.

At this time classical music had taken a foremost place. It is important we should clearly define what is meant by classical music.

CHAPTER II.

TONALITY—CLASSICAL MUSIC.

CLASSICAL MUSIC is that which follows laws framed and laid down by the early masters, who, taking their inspiration from the general laws of Nature herself, understood that Art could not be chaos, and quite as much as the stars above us, all musical sounds must be regulated and obedient to a certain order.

Thus, the music known as 'classical' obeyed the laws of tonality, that is, had its basis on the fundamental key; and the modulations of the great divisions of the composition could only follow whither they could be led, by one of the notes composing the perfect or common chord of the first key—which is, hence also, the general key of the piece, since it rules, regulates, and commands the others; and since on this foundation rests that unity of the work which is demanded in music, as much as in any dramatic or other literary composition.

Every great composition, subject to one and the

same plan, had, in the first place, three principal divisions—that is to say, three different movements. The first, of a *tranquil* character, was the most elaborated. The second, *slow*, was *par excellence* the expressive and poetic part. The third, *fast* and lively. For the first movement it was necessary to proceed as follows. The composer found a '*motif*.' This *motif* was to form the foundation of his work (the outline of the painting); he worked out this *motif*, which took the name of 'the subject.' He had then to find another which should be in contrast to the first. The one would be animated, the other melodious. He had then to guide and intertwine the two, binding them together to the best of his ability by turns and passages having some resemblance to each other; and the working out and development of the two subjects, terminating at length in a different key from the original one of the piece, formed what is called the first part of the first movement. This is always repeated, so as to establish it, and make it well understood by the listener.

In the second part the principal subject had to be developed by passing through a series of modulations, and here shone out the harmonising talent. From modulation to modulation, at length the composer brought back the first *motif*, and changing the key of his second subject, returned, in conclusion, to the original key. This question of the

key (*tonalité*) was considered of extreme importance by the earlier great masters, for from this was derived the principal unity of their composition ; moreover, everything was to be carried out in regular order.

The first part of a piece could only end upon the fifth either above or below. The slow movement, or the second part, had also to be either in the key of the fifth above or that of the fifth below, and the reason of this is, that these two keys have notes which occur in the common chord of the first key. Let us take, for example, a piece composed in C major. The common chord of the tonic is C E G, the key-note of the fifth above is G (major or minor). G is thus common to both chords, because the second is G B D. The key-note of the fifth below is F (major or minor.) In this case the chord is F A C, thus C is in both chords.

Then, for variety, with the object of widening the circle to be traversed, they extended the influence of the tonic by permitting the second movement to be in E minor, the relative of G major, and also in the key of E major, because E occurs in the chords of C E G and E G B.

Finally, as a last extension, they added the key of A flat major to all the preceding, because the note C is in the chords C E G, and A flat, C, E flat, and consequently forms a link between them. It is then evident that the tonality might pass

through seven keys without destroying the general unity which was rigorously demanded by the first inventors of classical laws.

The rondeau or last movement was in the original key, and was thus named because the same *motif* recurred again and again through the music, just as in literature* the strophe has the same lines repeated at the end of every stanza.

A fourth movement was early added to these; it was interpolated between the first and the slow movement, and was always a minuet—a dance melody, that allowed of some embellishment of fancy. Later on the 'Scherzo,' invented by Beethoven, took the place of the minuet.

I would here urge my readers to consider the application of the rules mentioned above, by studying three masters of widely different genius, but all of truly classical stamp.

Hummel, who is always faithful to 'the rules'; Weber, whose style is somewhat more fanciful; Beethoven, *par excellence* the genius of symphony, who is too cramped by speech, but for whom all the emotions can find utterance in the instrumental voice. Take his Sonata Op. 2, No. 3:—

* The ancient roundelay.

It is one of the most classical in form ever written by this master of masters. It is in the playful and pastoral style, but it is one of the most surprising examples of the richness of harmony, the ingenuity of modulations, and

'Of linked sweetness long drawn out,'

which characterise this matchless genius.

You will find in the slow parts of each of the works I have alluded to, a profoundly religious feeling. There came always a moment of prayer in all the aspirations of those who are already called the 'Old masters,' but whom we should do better, I think, to call 'the Immortals.' They remembered that around the altars of the ancients music's earliest strains were heard; now all is reversed.

Modern music prays no longer. I do not know whether this is progress, but Art now has become sensualistic and appeals in particular to the nerves.

But to return to our subject. We know already that the first part of a piece should set forth two *motifs*, which are, in fact, the only purely original conception. After the exposition of these *motifs*, or subjects, they must be worked out. Now, there are three forms of elaborating, approved by the school.

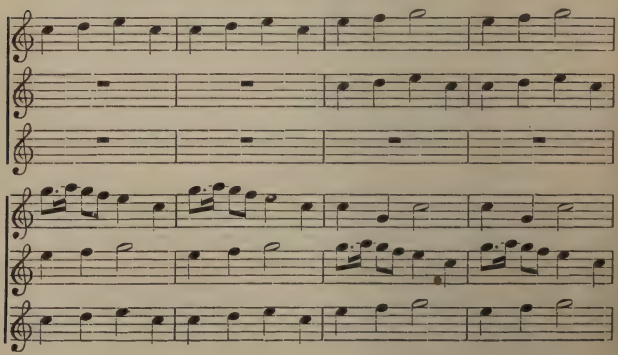
One is Counterpoint. This is the name given

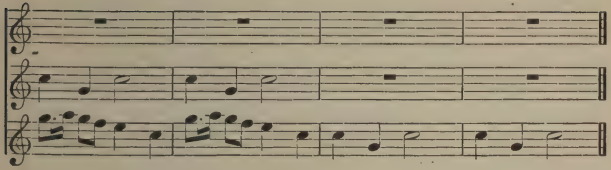
to a combining, an entanglement, or, if I may so express it, a *game*, of the two subjects, and of the passages which unite them, mingling, accompanying each other by turns, assisting each other to pass through the different keys; just as two ivory balls on a green cloth help each other mutually, and even by their collisions, to advance and to gain by a number of evolutions the place to which the skill of the player directs them. We find this form, Counterpoint, always and everywhere in music. It is the richest form for combinations, its changes are inexhaustible—as one may easily understand.

Another form is the Canon.

In the Canon we have a *motif* set forth, first by one voice or instrument, and then the same repeated by another and another.

One example will make this clear:

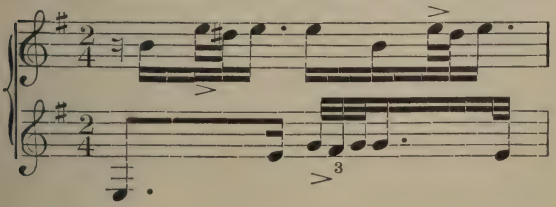




The Canon can only be written for three voices; naturally, because it can only exist in the notes of the common chord. This form cannot be employed for long without producing an unbearable poverty and monotony, because it does not admit of harmony. But from the Canon is derived what is called *Imitation*, which is much used. This term explains itself. It can be applied to both melody and harmony, already so richly fertile, and then Imitation gives variety without weariness, as it is never long continued.

A charming example of 'Imitation' is found in the 'Rappel des Oiseaux' by Rameau. I must request my readers to study this delightful page which represents a quite old style of imitation for it dates back among the early times.

It carries its meaning in its name, and begins thus:



A third musical form, more complicated and decidedly more severe, is the Fugue. In this, everything submits to mathematical exactness, when once a short subject is found.

The name Fugue is derived from the Latin, *fuga*, to indicate that the *motifs* chase one another. It is composed of a subject or chief *motif*, of a reply, and of a contra-subject, and these three parts must follow, pursue, accompany one another, without the addition of a single note foreign to these parts.

Again, Fugues may have several *motifs*, always following the same rules. Or the same *motif* may be written backwards,—all the notes reversed.

Such is a brief outline of some of the principal laws which gave the title of classical to the music framed in obedience to them. I have given only some of the most concise, only such as may serve to make my meaning clear and easy to follow.

It was quite time that the forms of composition should be definitely laid down, for by the eighteenth century liberal ideas were advancing with rapid strides, and the agitation of men's minds needed some new and fuller method of expression.

Faith and feudal principles had long held sway. Music had been calm and austere. The Bach dynasty had reigned almost supreme for a period approaching two centuries.

Then, as society advanced, manners became softer and more polished, and Music, as the result, grew gay and spirited.

From the strict austerity of Sebastian Bach, eighty years carry us to Joseph Haydn, the finest, daintiest spirit imaginable ; and to Mozart, who is grace and tenderness personified ; very much in the same way as people passed on (more slowly, it is true) from the heavy armour of the knights of old, to the laces and ribbons of the youthful cavaliers—a change which was common to the whole of Europe. Towards the close of the century came a time when the spirit of man imperiously asserted its claim for independence. Germany and England had been shaken to their foundations : society everywhere cast aside class privileges, France passed through its terrible Revolution, and the mighty voice of Liberty made itself heard throughout the world. With one bound passion burst into the domain of music, scaled the heights, conquered all the centuries, and seemed to attain the apogee of human power when inscribing the name of Beethoven.

But the rules laid down by the early masters had been so true, so marvellously well devised, that they remained unshaken, and that which appeared narrow and puerile in the infancy of

the art, was now revealed in all its breadth. These rules were the flood-gates needed to regulate the course of the torrent of inspiration, lighthouses to warn Fancy off the rocks, the guiding thread through the labyrinth of thought; in a word, order and wisdom, reflecting, as it were, the wisdom and order which render the universe comprehensible to our intelligence.

CHAPTER III.

THE AGE OF THE RENAISSANCE.

THE laws of classical composition extended in their formation, application and development throughout three centuries. In delineating them, I have been led on to dwell also upon their splendid results.

We must now turn back the pages of history to more ancient times.

We find the work of the piano begins with the first records of its forerunner, the clavecin or harpsichord, in the sixteenth century ; and we enter on a period in the life of the world, as of our art, that is of exceptional interest. I mean that included in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which is one of the most striking in European history ; a period in which the human mind casting off its fetters, soared aloft, taking some of its most brilliant flights. We pause in astonishment as we contemplate these times, 'fertile in miracles,' into which crowds all the greatness characteristic of

the modern age. The period begins with Henry VIII. in England, Francois I. in France, Charles V. in Spain and Germany, Soliman II. at Constantinople, and Leo X. on the throne of St Peter, and it leads on to the time when the great Newton lived, and the reign of William III. in England—to the end of that of Louis XIV in France, and it embraces *all* the men who have evinced the highest —the most astonishing intellect ; whether in letters, in painting, sculpture, architecture, or in science, in all its branches.

When the terrible feudal wars had at length founded the great territorial divisions of Europe, in each of these divisions unity prevailed. Royalty, disencumbered of its great vassals, had become capable of governing ; and, in a word, order was established.

As soon as the petty quarrels of self-interested men had ceased, and the people felt they had a nationality, for which they could fight—then, the genius of each of these nationalities began to manifest itself—and, as if to compensate for a long subjection, it burst forth with a brilliancy that confounds us. In short, the sixteenth century, which is called the age of the Renaissance, rival of the Greece of Pericles, and of the Rome of Augustus, and the seventeenth, which proved a continuation of this splendour, presents to our view a long list

of men of genius, gifted in every line, masters in all, whom we can only compare with the antique.

But if this period is called the 'Renaissance' in its application to the arts, as if to make plain that the genius of man after having slumbered for a lengthened time, had now arisen to a new and glorious life, it ought also to be called the age of discovery and of invention ; for to it we owe the adaptation of physical laws in numerous examples, such as the art of printing, the opening up the science of optics, the first principles of the use of steam and other aids to civilisation.

Whilst such men as Copernicus or Galileo discovered the movement of the earth, others, such as Christopher Columbus or Vasco di Gama, discovered the new world. Luther and Calvin on the one side, Locke and Spinoza on the other, led on men's souls. All minds were gushing with new ideas—all was changing—all was becoming enlightened—all men had now learnt to think! It was a glorious time!

It reminds us of the grand story of creation out of chaos. The age of feudalism with its iron gauntlet and its long sword had fashioned and moulded the form of modern humanity. The statue is ready for the breath of life! The mind of man is now fitted to receive the inspiring breath of genius!

Once again 'the Spirit of God moves over the face of the deep!'

But if the higher summits of intelligence were thus vivified; if the leaders marked out the route by the glare of the torch of genius for the path of future generations, the rays were but slow to penetrate among the mass of the people.

The object of our study, music, still remained among the poor and the lowly.

Besides this, the great want—the *need* for music comes only when civilisation is much advanced, when, having spoken all we require to say, there remains an indefinable something more still to be expressed.

However, under the influence of the colossal movement of this period, we note that even in music too, a step forward is made. At length, thanks to the harpsichord, she comes forth from the church, and, entering softly in, she seats herself beside the hearth of some privileged home. She becomes the companion of the thinker—she is his chief repose—she mingles in the life of his family; approaches the cradle and teaches the little child to fancy that guardian angels watch over him. She repeats in the melodies of the dance the soft words of love that have passed between youth and maiden. She bends to whisper in the ear of the aged, recollections of the past.

Like all that is young, Music, at the time we speak of, knows not sorrow. She smiles; she is gay—and can only wear an aspect of joyousness. It is this naïve and spring-like freshness that we must expect to find in the first composers for the harpsichord.

By the side of these, however, are the severe combinations of those who, insisting that Music must not be allied with Sensibility, force her back into the depth of the sanctuary, and recognise in her only the golden harp of Prayer.

CHAPTER IV.

THE IDYLLIC AGE.

'Mignonne, allons voir si la rose
Qui, ce matin avait desclose
Sa robe de pourpre au soleil
A point perdu ceste vesprée
Les plis de sa robe pourprée
Et son teint au votre pareil!'—*Ronsard.*

'Come, maiden mine, let us see if the rose
Whom we, this morning, beheld unclose
Her robe of crimson toward the sun,
Have, by this evening, lost anyone
Of the folds, that were in her vesture fine,
Or aught of her blush, that resembles thine!'

THESE dainty and delightful lines of Ronsard, to my mind, exactly give the character of the music of Haydn and Mozart, and of the period in which they lived—a period when gracefulness of style predominated, but a gracefulness that is not devoid of affectation.

Music had grown into form and musical phrases, had attained a certain development: they were now symmetrical, but began to be lengthened out considerably. Modulation was well understood;

systems of harmony, by giving rules for concords, had made known and popularised these concords. The laws relating to *mode* and to tonality were absolutely established. Melody had sprung into life ; harmony, either as simple accompaniment or as combination ; imitation, counterpoint, plain and double, in fact, all which constitutes the richness and variety of music, all was known, classified, and was considered beyond dispute.

On the other hand, ' Opera,' which had succeeded to the ' Mysteries ' of the Middle Ages, had acquired the power of expressing the emotions. It flourished in Italy, where the finest voices were plentiful, and where, consequently, the first great schools were founded ; and it had come on into France in the train of the Medicis, and from thence spread to all parts of the civilised world. For, it is evident, no sooner was the desire entertained for representing great historical characters by the lyric drama, than it became absolutely necessary to discover sounds that might correspond to the different types portrayed by the imagination ; and that it was not possible for a Dido and an Iphigenia, a Calchas or a Paris, to experience like emotions. Thus, therefore, the dramatic, the pathetic, in short, every shade of colouring in the work, had to be considered.

It was at this moment there passed across

all European society a wave, that one might call Idyllic. The mind of man, wearied by the extraordinary efforts and successes of the last two centuries, was doubtless craving for rest, and although betwixt two revolutions, that of England just passed, and that of France in preparation, and in spite of continual wars, everyone now took up a taste for refined delicacy, for gay-coloured ribbands, for sheep and shepherdesses, for Iris and Chloe!

With the paintings of Boucher and Fragonard, rural scenes covered the walls. At the court festivals in London, Paris and Berlin, pastoral dramas were represented, in which the highest personages were the actors. The *genre* 'Pompadour' characterised a time of amazing grace and charm, which, with its hoops, powder and patches, one may call the 'triumph of the Rose,' when everyone tried to be young, sweetly perfumed, pretty as that flower; a style which reigned in France and Germany until 1789.

Music had reached the age which, to define my idea, I may liken to that of Maidenhood, and therefore easily she became a reflection of this lively society, that was rather gallant than tender, and was most whimsical in its tastes.

CHAPTER V.

THE AGE OF EMANCIPATION.

THE 'triumph of the Rose' was of short duration. The upper ranks of society were well aware of the philosophic and revolutionary ideas which, at this epoch, agitated men's minds; but they would not believe in their power, and still continued to sing, to dance, and to make merry, while this dangerous movement gained ground among the masses.

'After us, the deluge!' said Louis XV., words which were echoed by his aristocrats. But the spirit of independence, wrought to the highest pitch, soon became the spirit of revolution. The deluge came sooner than was expected; society was overthrown, and many of those who had danced and sung were swept away in the general destruction.

I am treating of music only, and therefore the historical facts I allude to need neither comment nor opinion of my own; I touch on them only so

far as they are inseparably bound up with the art, and to this connection I limit myself.

It is very remarkable—and a further evidence of what I have said already—that the masters of the musical art have always been the interpreters of the popular feeling of their own time, and *not* of those which were *in advance* of their time.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, we find two currents of political feeling that flowed side by side. The upper ranks of society wanted pleasure and repose, after the long wars, civil and religious, which had distracted the nations. But the 'Third Estate' (*Le Tiers Ordre*) and the people wanted liberty, and this sacred word, properly understood or otherwise, had began to be muttered angrily, as the wind of the coming tempest that nothing can restrain.

Then we find the last works of Mozart were separated by only a few years from the great maturity of Beethoven, and we may consider these two men as the types, in the contrast of their works, of the two currents I have spoken of. Mozart is the unrivalled songster of the privileged classes, and in Beethoven it is all humanity that sings or that weeps. And here we may stop, for the art of music has nothing more to desire! It has its Virgil and its Raphael in the one; its Homer and its Michael Angelo in the other; and

yet more, for we must ascend to the Sacred Prophets themselves to find expression of truth and feeling so human and at the same time so divine.

But if Beethoven, like a second Ezekiel, dominates over his epoch, there is a powerful army round about him preceding and accompanying him. Handel wrote his Oratorios and carried religious music to the highest pitch of grandeur. Glück had raised theatrical declamation or lyric tragedy to a point until then unknown. Vocal music had given forth accents so thrilling and sympathetic as had wrung the soul, preparing the way for the advent of symphony of a far higher order than had yet appeared. Hadyn had begun this, Mozart had followed, and Beethoven came on to make of the symphony a Jacob's ladder, the summit of which should reach to heaven and the Infinite.

Under the pressure brought about by the development of thought, instruments were discovered more in accordance with the aspirations of the art, and the 'hammer-clavier'—the piano as we now know it—was invented. Ah, it was very far off from the magnificent instrument of our day! But the mind which wrote the immortal pages which we admire and strive to understand,—this mind, I say, was so beautiful, so large, so noble in expression, that even so grand an in-

strument as we have here, with all the immense improvements that have been superadded, gives only barely the means we require for adequately interpreting it.

We are at times surprised to observe that the greatest masters who are, as it were, the condensers of the general sentiments of their time, were but little understood in their own day, and that it is only future generations who do them justice. This may seem strange, but at the same time it is logical. Men of a certain epoch cannot analyse their own time, nor can they understand it. The individuals which compose it are not aware either of their own strength or of their own tendencies. They know not precisely what they seek. Their feelings are too disunited, and take form only as they group themselves unconsciously. Their attempts at progress affect them by a certain uneasiness, an agitation of which they know not the meaning. When, therefore, this darkness becomes illumined by genius, giving an outline to these shadowy aspirations, they know not at first what is signified, and the man of genius is treated as one out of his senses.

Let us imagine a person in a subterranean vault. He seeks for the outlet, longing for light. But, if this light shines suddenly upon him, he is

dazzled—he is blinded—sees nothing; is even forced to close his eyes until the pupil recovers power to bear the sunny rays he has so much desired. It is the same for the mental eye.

Again, it is strange, but true, that few great men are born in the higher classes of society. Is it that suffering—that hard nurse, strengthens the soul, and, as Musset says,—

'Rien ne nous rend si grand qu'une grande douleur.'

Is it that the law of gravitation is the more stringent the greater the height; and that, on the part of the people, the sovereignty of genius readjusts its level with a kind of violence? Is it that 'Nécessité l'ingénieuse,' to use La Fontaine's expression, sharpens the faculties? or is it rather that He who taught that 'Blessed are the poor,' and who Himself was poor, thinks it well to bestow upon His own—His privileged children—His mantle of poverty. Be this as it may, the fact remains that men of the greatest genius have had to fight for long years, perhaps all their lives, even to obtain their daily bread; while they strove also for the lofty places they would take around the sun of immortal fame.

It was then, at the very moment when civilised society had made its greatest advance towards emancipation, that the art of music reached its

highest point, at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century.

These are the reasons, in my opinion, why music has followed the course we trace in its history; this is why Beethoven was born during the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Once more, music is the highest form of expression for our over-charged emotions, and in consequence must absolutely follow, and reflect with implicit fidelity, the contemporary prevailing temper and condition of the minds of men.

And, from this time forward, music becomes the most elevating—the noblest of the arts, by its power of expression—its richness of ideas—the magnificence of its proportions. I hope, though I cannot understand how it can be, that she will advance higher still; but, thus far, I do not think anyone, except a few fanatical persons—that we pity—can dare to say that those lofty geniuses, Beethoven, Weber and Mendelssohn, or those men of wonderful talent, Hummel or Schubert, have yet been surpassed.

CHAPTER VI.

MODERN MUSIC.

MUSIC, 'according to the rules,' had, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, attained to such a perfection that it seemed to defy all probability of its making further progress in the symphonic style; and in the fifty years following, dramatic music, through Rossini, the genius of melody, and Meyerbeer, a master of counterpoint, had also reached its acme.

But the human mind is ever restless and agitated. The spirit of rationalism had advanced, and was now invading every branch of philosophy and of science. The human intellect was tormented by a perpetual hunger for investigation of all things; it demanded peremptorily of creation that her veil should be withdrawn, and of the Creator that He should reply to their questions. But creation refusing to yield up her secrets, and the Creator vouchsafing no reply, man turned away baffled and displeased, and gave himself to doubt, questioning and distrusting all things.

Thus the tendencies of the nineteenth century, as years advanced, became more pronounced. It is the age of agitation—of inquiry—then of doubt and of denial, when nothing is accepted without sifting it afresh. The traditions of the past are disputed; every belief, and even all confidence, is mocked at. The past is dragged open, not in order to find instruction there; while respecting it—but for the purpose of contradiction—if such be possible. The entire school of philosophy, from Thalès de Millet to our own time, is engaged in searching and in controversy, and this controversy extends to everything. The analytic spirit passes from the infinitely great to the infinitely small—not for the sake of admiring what has preceded them, but in order to see what fault can be found, and consequently, to change—to alter what has been stated.

'To alter,' that is the great longing of our time, since our general aspiration is for novelty, for 'some new thing.' I admit that this fever has had magnificent results. Science has made gigantic strides; and wonderful discoveries are so numerous that we now scarcely pay attention to them. We shall doubtless leave to posterity the history of a time of marvellous fecundity, and our age will be ranked among the most illustrious; but, if in all things we are hastening forward, if we have steam to carry

us along, and electricity to efface distance, we pay dearly for these benefits by the enormous increase of the population in our madhouses!

By this longing for 'some new thing,' moral order has been profoundly disturbed. In seeking for material proofs of all things, men have entirely lost sight of Him whose being cannot be proved by materialistic evidence; and from doubt, from rationalism, they have come to sensualism or to materialism. To feel, to experience, is what is sought after now; and I consider it one of the strangest phenomena of the age, the fact, that by dint of thinking men should have come to deny thought in the Author of all things—for thought itself, being immaterial, should rather lead them to the spiritual—to God. Quite the contrary; it is to *sensation* that everything now directs.

Well, the musical art too, so idealistic a thing, and so truly immaterial, has even followed the same path. In this sense it has been materialised; instead of its being made especially the interpreter of sentiment, it is now required to shake our nerves with its shocks of sound; to force us to experience emotions, not only in the spirit but in the flesh. We are to be entirely absorbed, vibrating soul and body to every impression, material or immaterial, in the drama they would conjure up. The result of this is immense fatigue,

and the uneasiness which we so often are aware of when listening to modern music ; for the composers of our time are geniuses of great power, and almost without our knowing it they have us completely under their sway.

With the earlier great masters—Bach, Hadyn, Mozart—sentiment was purely religious and melodious. Passion was excluded. Your thoughts ranged through the paths of Eden, but suffering had no place there. Beethoven, Weber and others of less eminence portrayed the great convulsions of the human soul, but the voice of the prophet who weeps over the sorrows of the world speaks also of heaven. In the first kind we enjoy a pleasure unalloyed by care ; in the second we experience the excitement of our deepest sympathies. But the Moderns would have us suffer with their suffering ; one must be not only a spectator, but an actor in the drama.

The diatonic mode, with its concords, which are full of repose, could not approach the state of the over-excited nerves—of the material longings which cry aloud, being no longer kept in check by the ideal. And at the very moment, too, when the laws of music had attained their greatest results through Beethoven, it happened that he, who was destined to be the first to destroy them, was born into the world—no other than Schumann.

By a glance at the life of this composer, gifted with undeniable genius, we shall understand his strength, as also his weakness.

Schumann, born in 1810, and son of a librarian at Zwickau, was not at first intended for the musical profession, and, strange to say, his intelligence appeared, in his quite early years, to be below the average. Like all children of his country, he was taught music when he learned to read. He had shown no taste for the piano before he was taken, in 1819, to Carlsbad, for his health. There he heard Moscheles play, and the impression this made on him was so strong and so deep, that from that time he devoted himself with ardour to the practice of this instrument. He was completely ignorant of the first elements of harmony when he made his first attempts in writing small compositions.

Until 1826, when his father died, he had no other guide, but his own instinct, in his musical studies; while in another line his imagination and feeling were vehemently excited, by the study of his favourite authors, Byron, and more especially Jean Paul Richter. It was from the latter that he caught that exaggeration of sentiment, and that contempt for form, which he could not afterwards conquer in spite of all his efforts.

In 1828 his mother and his tutor insisted on his giving up the study of the piano for that of law.

But although '*studiosus juris*,' at Leipzig, he spent but little time on the Pandects, and made the acquaintance of Friedrich Wieck, from whom he had lessons on the piano. The following year he went to Heidelberg, where he led a life of amusement; and finally, after three years thus lost, he obtained permission from his mother to devote himself entirely to music. He took up his abode with Wieck as a boarder and pupil.

But he was now one-and-twenty, and knew not one word of the rules of the art. It was at this period that the incident occurred which ruined his career as *virtuoso*, and which seems to indicate at least a strange lack of common sense. He invented a system of finger exercise, which he kept a profound secret from his most intimate friends. His plan was to fasten the third finger of his right hand firmly by a string to some object or other, and then to practise the four others. The result, which might have been easily foreseen, was that the third finger became paralysed, and in a short time this paralysis extended to the whole hand.

In 1831 Schumann made some essays in criticism, and, thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Jean Paul and his theories on art, he conceived the idea of developing them in a new direction, whilst manifesting the most determined contempt for the traditions of the old masters.

With some other kindred spirits he started, in 1834, a journal of criticism, in which his theories were expounded ; he continued to contribute to this until 1844.

It was only in 1840 that Schumann at length became aware that he could write nothing consecutive, nothing perfect or durable, without acquiring that technical knowledge which he had hitherto so thoroughly despised. He then began seriously to study. But he was thirty years old, and it is only in early youth that the discipline of rules can be learnt thoroughly. The mind must be early inoculated with them, in order that they may, as it were, become an integral part of it.

Moreover, since 1833—that is, since his twenty-third year—he had, more or less, suffered from a nervous disorder which affected his mental powers.

In 1845, in the midst of an excessive amount of work, a terrible attack completely prostrated him, and from this time the mental crisis recurred more and more frequently. They tried travelling for him : his wife (*née* Clara Wieck) tried her very utmost to restore tranquillity to his troubled brain. Alas! in vain. He became nearly deaf, his speech hesitating, his countenance dejected. He fancied that he was in communion with spirits, and thought that he heard perpetually one note,

with which other fugutive sounds combining, formed different harmonies.

On the 7th February 1854 he rushed from his parlour, where two friends were sitting with him, and without speaking a word, ran out, in his dressing-gown, and threw himself into the Rhine. He was rescued, but he was completely insane, and it was necessary to confine him in an asylum at Endenich, near Bonn. He languished there for two years, and then died, on July 29th, 1856, in his forty-sixth year.

Scarcely any of his compositions, therefore, were written when he was in full health, or in entire possession of his mental faculties. There are none which were written with full knowledge of the rules of harmony. His music is, then, the naïve and faithful picture of the condition of his mind. His emotions, as well as his hallucinations, are there produced, without order, as they occurred to him. His love for her who was the high and noble companion of his life inspires there the sweeter notes, whilst those mental shocks which impelled him to start from his bed to write down the melodies which he thought the shades of Schubert or of Mendelssohn had dictated to him, inscribe there the clashing chords, followed by long pages of wild dreams. He was truly a great artist, for *his art* was his mother-tongue, by which

he expressed all things. But he was a poet, who, being ignorant of the orthography, knew not the rhetoric of his mother-tongue. And thus it happened that, almost without knowing or desiring it, he was the father of the modern school of music, one that teaches that, returning to a state of nature, we should sing, weep, or love by instinct, or (to explain) by uncontrolled impulse.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REALISTIC SCHOOL.

WE have seen that the composers of our own day, following, with the rest of the world, the philosophical tendency of the human mind, have wished that music, which had once been a beautiful dream, should now become *a reality*. Musical art having passed through phases of idealism and romanticism, has now come to realism, to materialism.

The modern tendency is to write what one feels, *just as one feels it*.

Now, the sensations, material or materialised, are seldom in repose, and in order adequately to render the agitation experienced by the modern mind, and to bring down music from its spiritual heights, two special methods have been employed: These are the absence of tonality and the alteration of rhythm.

The diatonic style is in great part abandoned for the chromatic, more incisive, and especially more free and unfettered by the rules. The

diatonic, full of concords, with its discords carefully prepared and resolved, consequently conducive to calm, is cast away, and in its place we have perpetual discords, acting on the nerves as a cat's claw on the skin—it does not exactly wound, but—can be felt!

Moreover, we are here, there and everywhere with the chromatic style—the rules of tonality (of the key) being set aside. The ground falls away from beneath our feet, when the tonality is doubtful, and this fact alone occasions a distress, a deep discomfort—such as physically we suffer from the pitching of a vessel at sea; our breath fails us—we seem to be tossed into the air to fall down we know not whither, and the whole nervous system instinctively shudders.

Further, there is here no need of deep science, for the harmonies, or rather the succession of chords is unfettered, like everything else. Besides, there are now only a few, very few chords, and all the rest is viewed as retardations (not resolutions, but, as it were, prolonged 'appogiature') of the fundamental notes of these few chords—which precludes all idea of correct or incorrect progression.

To this first trouble is added the displacement of the rhythm. To explain:—Musical phrases, constructed according to the accepted laws, should finish on the strong beats—that is to say, on the

first notes of each binary division. For, it is evident, in beating time, that the beats must be unequal in *accent;* the first will be strong—the second less so, as a rebound. The early musicians knew only of the binary divisions. They gave four beats to divide off one unity, which they called *maxima*, and which represented the whole value of what we call a bar—that is, where the lines which separated each of these unities, or what represented them in value recurred, bars, which gave great facility for reading music, by fixing for the eye the place for the strongest beat in each unity. Thus they divided the unity into four parts equal in length ; and they had then in each bar, two strong beats, the first the most important, the third less marked, but stronger than the second and fourth, which were the notes of rebound.

All the system of values in notation was constructed on this basis.

Later, the ternary division was invented by a blind Italian whose name is not recorded, and this was long known as 'the blind man's time.' It had one strong beat against two weak.

Again, the musical phrase adopted by the classical composers consisted of eight bars, after which a slight pause gives a certain sort of relief before beginning a second clause ; and, I repeat, every musical phrase ought to conclude on the

strong beat, and this termination answering to our breathing, allows a regular respiration. I use the word 'respiration' advisedly, to point out that the language of music, just as that of human speech, has its marked stops; and, even without being a musician, we feel this.

But the modern musical phrase has no regular stop. It depends on the whim of the composer. Besides, the tendency is for irregular phrases, free from the constraint of rule (it is always freedom they want!); something like free verses, without cadence and without number; and long phrases, thus constructed, can dispense with development and with the second clause, but seem as if they would never end, and occasion us a stifling sensation; in the same way as when a public speaker appears so rarely to draw breath during his discourse, that it takes away our breath to listen to him.

When the great composers wished to use counter-time—that is to say, to accentuate the phrase on the weak beat, they did it with certain precautions, it never lasted long; and they always kept the strong time marked, either in the accompaniment, or in one of the parts when there were several, or in the symphony.

In modern music there is nothing of all this. The rhythm is played with, and not only is the counter-time very frequently used, but strong time is

often left out altogether. This gives us much the same unpleasant feeling as is experienced by a man running, when he stumbles. We have a sensation of losing one's balance, which is most annoying.

Not content with these infractions, and finding them weak in their effect, the moderns mix the different rhythms together, mingling the binary with the ternary and quaternary, doubling them and making them accompany each other. Hence spring frequent alterations of the movement in the same piece,—then divisions into 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 time changing, leaping from one to the other at every bar, and strange breaks that keep the mind in constant disquiet. In a word, they have sought *and found* the method of radically overturning the unity of the conduct of a work; unity, which appears to have become a veritable bugbear for our recent composers.

The employment of these different methods has attained the desired end; for, thus agitated, it is impossible to be indifferent, and we can take our share of the torment our poet is suffering, If he, oppressed by his dream, is unable to breathe, his listener must be suffocated also from sympathy; and it must be confessed that, when listened to in this spirit, modern music has a genuine grandeur. Those who are disposed to accept it, become passionately fond of it, while it is certain that those who are antipathetic, detest it no less forcibly—

an exaggeration which, in each case, is to be regretted.

In one way there is certainly an improvement—I mean in the direction of descriptive music. And it ought to be so, for this is the only side on which music does slightly touch upon materialism. However, here too it is most desirable not to go too far. I do not fear the leaders of the new school. They are held back from too great exaggerations by their genius itself, in the first place, and in the next, by the deep studies they have been forced to pursue, in order to learn what has already been done before going further, and of this knowledge, this rich intellectual nourishment, true 'moëlle de lions,' enough always remains to hold them back from logical deductions that are *too* wild. But I fear much the *pupils* of these schools!

In fact, already I have heard with my own ears, one enthusiastic adept of descriptive music declare, that he believed it would soon become possible, even to express by music the colour of objects as well as their substance. The listener would know, by the grouping of notes, if your musical reverie had led you into a garden or into a wood—if you gazed upon a rose bush or one of lilac; if the roses were white or red. And the person who seriously expressed this hope to me was neither out of his senses nor deficient in understanding—he was a man of

much intelligence on every other point—a respected professor in a scientific school of high repute, and a biologist of acknowledged merit. But, being a fanatical partisan of Wagner, and living entirely with the stars of the opera, he had arrived at believing that his emotions, already so overwrought, would become far more so by the advance of music in power of description, and that he would come to a sort of double life, as lucid, as material as the actual one, and that thus would the charms of existence be doubled—if, indeed, life had charms for him at all! In any case, should the ordinary life not smile for him at all times, he could fly to the other state, and, at least in music, live upon love, perfumes, flowers and ambrosia, just as if he really possessed these pleasant things.

My amazement as I listened must have inspired him with profound pity for me, while as for myself, he filled me with terror!

The 'Messiah of the new school,' as he has called himself—Wagner—gives us some idea of what is required in our day. He began by operas, like 'Rienzi,' in which there are melodious phrases. He renounces these now. He gives us, instead, a long 'melopœia' (which may be explained somewhat as the declamation or chant of the ancient Greeks), interspersed with *effects*, and with imitations of nature as material as he can make them. But this

brain, powerful as it undoubtedly is, intends that you shall not remain in your usual state—he comes not to you, he insists on your giving yourself up to him. He carries you away into a world of fancy, where the sensations can and must be multiplied tenfold, and with this object he agitates you by tremendous antagonisms, by gigantic waves of sound. The orchestra is increased; new instruments are daily invented, the place of others, as the flute, becomes more important. The brass resounds and thunders. Then he finds it necessary to have powerful choirs; then all the luxury of the most captivating '*mise-en-scène*.'

I do not wish to dwell on this point, as I am a woman; but I may remark that, in carrying this further and further, there is no reason why music should not become a mere accessory in a dream-land voyage to the Paradise of Mahomet—only too natural a consequence, in my opinion, of the sensualistic treatment of everything! The senses become blunted, losing their delicacy of perception. The attempt is made to revive them by *augmentation*, and so it will happen that, step by step, we shall come to be superior to the brute only because it cannot refine its sensibilities.

On one occasion Liszt remarked to Fétis, who was indulging in some criticism on the tendencies of Wagner,—'I belong to the *two or three in-*

telligences of Germany who see clearly into the future of music !' We will not attempt to unveil the hard fate of those other poor intelligences condemned to see so darkly, or even not to see at all ; but one may ask, and I hope without offending *the* two or three intelligences in question, 'What *can* be this future ?' It is true, that the answer is sad enough. Either chaos, as a consequence of the neglect of all form and law, or triviality, resulting from exaggeration of the descriptive. Let us close our eyes, and repose in our own epoch, the works of which, in spite of their lawless temper, yet possess, for the highest intelligences, great and sublime beauties.

In the opposite direction, we have our views contracted to the most limited point ; the smallest sensations are to be highly magnified. Always with the pretext of communicating to one's contemporaries *everything* we feel, the most transient emotions are chronicled. The quantity of berceuses, of reveries, '*pages d'album*,' and I know not what, is innumerable. However little one may have to say, that little must be said. It reminds me of some very true lines by our French poet, De Musset :—

> 'Le qu'on fait aujourd'hui, on le dit, et le cause
> En est bien excusable ; on fait si peu de chose,
> Mais si peu qu'il ait fait, chacun trouve à son gré
> De le voir par écrit, dûment enregistré,

Chacun sait maintenant, quand il fait de la prose,
Ce siecle est, à vrai dire, un mandarin lettré ! '

No doubt my criticism will be found rather severe, and it will be supposed that I have a great antipathy to this new music. My readers will then be surprised when I say that the contrary is the case. It is even through its faults (if I may so express it) that I like it, and that I feel it to be true. I think it is now generally considered that the human mind is at present passing through a sort of crisis, in which all beliefs, all traditions, all laws, everything that has been believed in or accepted, are called in question, and give rise to active controversy. This century, whether it prove to be the setting of a decaying society or the dawn of a renewed society, this present century is deeply, even passionately, interesting to all minds. But, whatever may be the result, the cry of humanity, as it traverses the ages, is a mighty voice which thrills the heart, and I hear it reproduced so clearly, so unmistakably in music, that I apply all the powers of my soul to endeavour to comprehend it; and it is with a deep and sympathising respect that I greet it on its way, whether it reveals itself in a short leaflet without any perceptible meaning, or whether it compresses all the marvels of the lyrical drama into three evenings of representation.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUMMARY OF PART I.

IN bringing to a conclusion this First Part of my work, and as a summary of what I have written, I would repeat here, that music is a requirement of man's higher faculties; that it came into sensible existence with his first aspirations of prayer, and that its development has followed up every advancing stage in the progress of the human mind. And yet this art has been the latest to attain its consummation, on account of its being the most sensitive, the most tender, the nearest to the soul.

In this respect man has followed the course of the Creator. For are we not told how, 'in the beginning,' when the world came into being, and all things thereon, God created *woman*, His last and most perfect work? And thus, when man has done his utmost in the ages, as warrior, legislator, savant, and even as sculptor and painter, there remains yet something to be achieved—something

nearer to heaven, and yet also closer to the vibrations of his own nature, and, lo! Music is *last* completed.

'Fairest, latest found,
Heaven's last best gift, my ever new delight.' *

But, as we have seen, and as was inevitable, Music bears the stamp of this intimate relation to the human soul. She has all the austerity of the age of religious faith, all the powerful aspirations of the times of passion, all the agitations of the period of doubt. Not to go further back than the scale (and, indeed, beyond this, definite information fails us), if we cast our glance across the path of the centuries, we perceive that each epoch is clearly marked.

We find always that some one man rises up whose genius is the reflex of his time. We have Bach, Beethoven and Wagner, and, grouped around them closely as the trees of the forest, in as great variety as the flowers of the garden, stand all the other master composers, more or less powerful, more or less gifted, but all giving expression to—laying bare, so to speak—the emotions of the soul, its poetry, love, aspirations, impressions, and giving their every tint and shade, howsoever indefinite they may be.

* Thus Adam addresses Eve in Milton's *Paradise Lost.* Book V. line 18.

And now let us approach in thought the personal life of some of these masters in their art. Let us, in a few cases, for they are too numerous for us to visit everyone of them—and a record including all would fill many volumes,—let us knock at their doors, enter into their different existences, inquire what were their dispositions, their characters, in what diverse ways their powers were developed, and let us learn the history of their works by examining the history of their lives!

PART II.

Personal History of the Composers for the Piano.

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY CLAVECINISTS—1550 to 1700.

WE now begin our study of the lives of the old composers, the first writers of music for the Piano, or rather for the instrument typifying our modern Pianoforte; called the Harpsichord or Spinette, in England; in France 'le Clavecin,' in Germany, 'Klavier'; the compositions for which were first published about 1550.

Before this period there had been excellent musical composers, especially in Italy, as we learn from the manuscripts to be seen in museums and private collections, often also from the fact that these authors, who perhaps were masters in other sciences as well, have in their writings recorded the titles or given extracts of their own musical

works, of which the MSS. have not come down to us.

The Gregorian chants in the sixth century were, for want of a defined tonality, only an adaptation of the ancient Greek *modes*, of chants used in the Eleusinian mysteries in honour of Ceres, and adopted in Christian worship.

These had been introduced into Gaul and Great Britain by the monk Augustine, the great missionary from Rome to England.

All that the succeeding thinkers and searchers into the nature of music could achieve, had been to lead on to the discovery of the Diatonic Scale, about the tenth century.

After the invention of the scale, discussions were begun which lasted for a considerable time, and, as I have before shown, the process, which revealed music as other than a mere science, was laborious and went on out of sight, hidden in the depth of the cloister, where everything which did not belong to war fled for refuge in those unquiet times. As there were no musical works published before about the middle of the sixteenth century, and it is only of *published* compositions I shall treat, I cannot throw back my narrative earlier than that date; and as music still mostly flourished, like other branches of science or study, beneath the shelter of the Church, we shall find our composers in

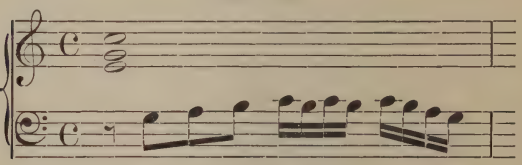
general to be men who were connected with some cathedral choir or royal chapel.

One of the earliest of the composers for the harpsichord was an Englishman, William Byrd, born about 1530. His father was Thomas Byrd, one of the body of the chapel royal in the time of Edward VI. and Queen Mary. He was a pupil of Tallis, a learned musician of the day, and who was attached to the royal chapel during the reigns of Henry VIII. and his successors, Edward VI., Mary and Queen Elizabeth.

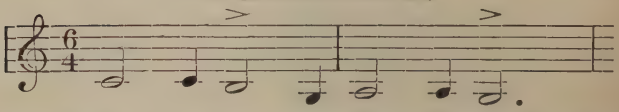
William Byrd was for a time organist at Lincoln, and on the death of Robert Parsons he became a member of the chapel royal, and eventually was appointed organist conjointly with his master Tallis. They obtained also conjointly a patent giving them the right to print and to sell musical books and papers — which patent became afterwards the property of William Byrd alone. Thus we find here the beginning of musical editorship. The cheque book of the chapel of the kings of England gives him the title of the 'Father of Music,' which commendation is fully justified by the quality of his work — the correctness of the harmonies, the graceful manner of introducing imitation of voices, the clearness of his style, and his attention to regularity of key. He was the Palestrina, the Orlando Lasso of England. All

his great works are for the church or the voice, and his compositions for the harpsichord are but few. There is, however, a prelude and variations on a song called the 'Carman's Whistle,' which are interesting. The prelude, as the name implies, is simply an indication of the key. In the time of Byrd, we must

PRELUDE.



THE CARMAN'S WHISTLE.

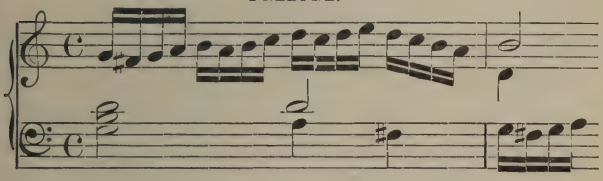


remember modulations were not regulated, and had no definite limits. The sharp and the flat were looked upon as attractive notes, which ought to be resolved either by rising or descending, but which did not imply change of key. They were ornaments, such as we should call notes of passage, but the tonality remained unaltered. Thus it was that the resources of the composer were very limited, and consisted, it might be, in a change of the rhythm or in the kind of accompaniment. The variations of the piece thus considered give a high idea of the fecundity of the writer. He died in 1623.

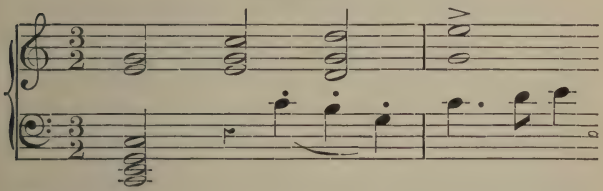
Another English composer contemporary with

him, and also the organist of the chapel royal conjointly with William Byrd on the death of Tallis, was Orlando Gibbons. He was born in 1583, obtained the decree of doctor of music at Oxford University in 1622, and died at Canterbury in 1629, whither he had been sent to assist at the marriage ceremony of Charles I. and Henrietta of France. The religious music of Gibbons is of an elevated character, but we will not enter upon it here. I have selected from among the few pieces he wrote for the spinette (an instrument even more limited in effect than the harpischord) a prelude and Gagliardo,* which shows much originality in the harmonies.

PRELUDE.



GAGLIARDO.



The prelude is written entirely on the upper 5th

* An ancient Spanish dance.

with F sharp. This was a great innovation at that time, and shows admirable boldness.

The Gagliardo is full of grandeur, even of majesty—and the first part also ends upon the upper 5th. The laws of the 'Unity of the Key' appear to cramp the genius of Gibbons. He feels constrained to break down the bounds of this narrow circle, and his ornamental notes occur as modulations that he seems to be unable to conclude. This is distinctly noticeable in the last page, where he actually passes through D major and G major to return to C major, without finding any satisfactory termination. It is a work that gives well the character of the harmony of that time when the rules were as yet unformed.

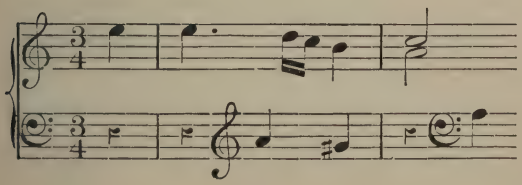
We pass on to Jerome Frescobaldi, the most talented, most learned, and the most celebrated organist of the end of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth. He was born at Ferrara. We must assign to him the period between 1587 and 1652, although the exact date of his birth and death are unknown. He was one of those rare intellects whose influence on their art is irresistible! Here we find ourselves wafted into the midst of the *tonality* of more recent times; on the open pathway of modulations, written with freedom and absolutely concluded. The *leading-note* is here, the diminished 5th has taken its proper rank in

the harmony and the fertility of imagination is no longer restricted.

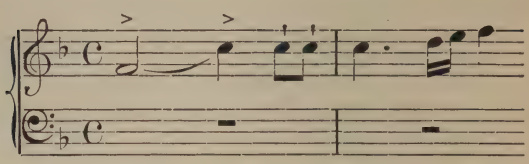
But to the sacred chant of the church service still belongs the severe rules of *tonality*, without possible modulation, for *there* all must be calm and solemn ; and Frescobaldi conformed to this necessity in his Magnificat, his hymns and anthems, but he completely changes his style for his *Canzoni*, his *Toccate*, his *Caprices*, and, in short, in all his music for the clavecin. His fugues also founded on the key of the leading-note are so different from those of his predecessors, that some writers have said of him that Frescobaldi is the first Italian whose playing of the fugue was inexact.

Frescobaldi, and later, Rameau, mark an important epoch in musical art.

In proof of this I may cite a short but delightful little piece by Frescobaldi, entitled ' Corrente,' in A minor. It has, in my opinion, an exquisite charm and freshness of its own ; and it is *melodious*, which was then quite a novelty.



I would also mention a Canzone—



As a performer on the organ, Frescobaldi had such a reputation that, when he was elected for the service in St Peter's of the Vatican, it is said that thirty thousand persons assembled in that vast church the first time he conducted the service.

In Germany we meet now, in a pupil of Frescobaldi, a composer of far greater severity of style, and who originated by his intricate modulations that which became later on the great richness of harmony of the German school. I mean Jean Jacque Frohberger, born in 1635, who died in 1695. He was son of a cantor of Halle, in Saxony, and had such a marvellous talent that, at fifteen years old, he was taken to Vienna by the Ambassador of Sweden, and presented as a prodigy to the Emperor Ferdinand III., who sent him to study at Rome under the direction of Frescobaldi. He remained there three years, acquiring the most wonderful talent of that time, and returned to Germany, where he was laden with honours.

In giving an outline of the life of Frohberger, I

ought not to omit an adventure related of him, which, in its contrasts of fortune, rivals the wildest romance.

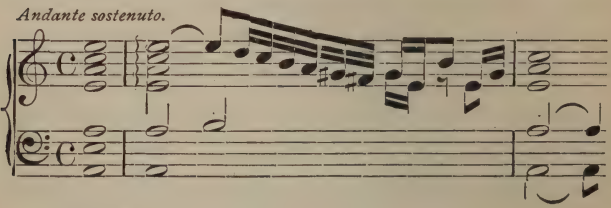
In 1662, Frohberger, having become widely celebrated in his own country, wished to extend his fame. He obtained leave of absence from the Emperor, and took his departure for England, passing through France. Unfortunately, he fell among robbers, who despoiled him of everything he possessed, except a few ducats he had hidden in his sailor's jacket. After this, the vessel in which he had sailed was taken by pirates. Frohberger, to avoid captivity, threw himself into the sea, and by the help of some fishermen was enabled to gain the shore. It was thus he landed on the English coast. Penniless and in tatters, he set out for London. Aided only by the charity of a few, and arrived at the great city, he knew not which way to turn or what to do. Suddenly his ear caught the tones of an organ within a sacred edifice, towards which he had wandered. It was Westminster Abbey. They awoke in him the strong desire to return thanks for his providential escape from death. He entered the Abbey, and soon was so lost in his devotions that he was unaware that the service was over, the congregation dispersed, and that the doors were being closed. 'My friend, it is time to leave,' said a

rough voice behind him. Frohberger rose to obey. 'You appear unfortunate,' said the old man, his questioner. 'You can see that good luck has not set her mark upon me,' replied Frohberger. 'I have been dragged down by robbers and pirates to the condition in which you see me. I know not how to stay my hunger, or where to lay my head—that is my story.' 'Let him believe it who can!' returned the old man. 'However, I will make you one proposal; you see in me the organist of this Abbey, and of the Court. If you can be the blower for me you will have board and lodging and will get a proper suit of clothes.'

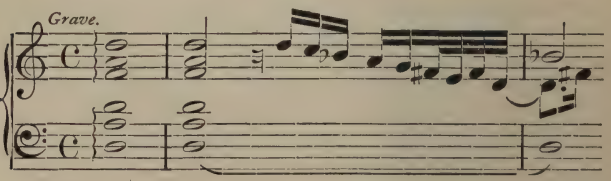
Here was a contrast; from being the first master of his art at the Court of Vienna, to the servile and mechanical office of blower to another organist! Nevertheless, Frohberger was glad to accept the lowly post thus offered him. And afterwards, often and often, the thought occurred to him of revealing himself by an improvisation upon the keys of the organ; but the fear of not being understood, and of losing his daily earned bread, held him back. At length, during the fêtes upon the marriage of Charles II. with Catherine of Portugal, he had to accompany his master to the Court, for the performance on the organ, at the royal festival. Dazzled by the magnificence around him, he all at once forgot to move the

staff of the bellows, and the sounds of the instrument ceased. Transported with rage, the organist sprang upon him, overwhelmed him with abuse, and struck him on the face. Indignation recalled the great artist to himself, and he would have soundly chastised the offender, had not the bystanders dragged off the choleric old man. The idea of a more noble vengeance sprang into the mind of Frohberger; he inflated the bellows, sat down to the keyboard, and began a theme, accompanying it with dissonances, which he multiplied and resolved in the happiest and most astonishing manner. All eyes were turned towards the organ; all inquired who could be the performer. A lady, who had heard Frohberger in Vienna, felt certain that it could be no other than he. He was desired to come forward; the king received him with distinction; had a harpsichord placed near him; and, when the artist had for an hour delighted the royal company, Charles II. placed a chain of gold upon his neck, which he had himself worn. From that moment Frohberger became the fashion; and for several years was laden with honours and with riches. By this unexpected turn of fortune, we find the dissonances of the musician's life became resolved in the most pleasing manner. And to us who read the anecdote in these matter-of-fact days, how strangely it sets before us the

state of society in which such an adventure could occur. However, the temperament of Frohberger, somewhat acrid, somewhat misanthropic, as indeed his music indicates, would not allow of his content. He wished presently to return to Vienna; but either his place there was filled, or his rivals maligned him to the emperor; and finally he died —abandoned and alone—at Mayence; his death being, in fact, hastened by his grief at finding himself thus forsaken. It would seem indeed true that, in one way or another, great artists are doomed to trouble. We recognise the character of Frohberger if we study two of his 'Toccate.' One in A minor



and another in D minor,

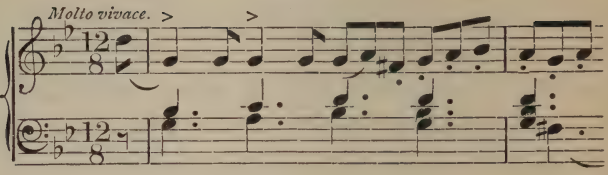


We now find that a certain progress has been made in the power of expression. Thus all the

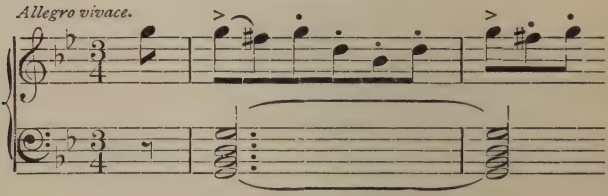
adagio which begins this 'Toccata,' has a character of the decided improvisation of Frohberger's preludes on the organ. Then comes a recollection of his sorrows, and one plaintive phrase constantly repeated comes in to excite our emotion. This mournful idea is accompanied by chromatic procession, which exhausts the lament. This is the second movement. A third movement all cut up, without any distinct melody, closes this short poem, which ends with a cadence entirely in the style of the organ. It is indeed to the organ that Frohberger's mind ever reverts!

But I would now cite an artist whose whole career was fortunate. Jean Baptist Loeillet, born in Ghent 1670, who died in London 1728. He gave himself up in his youth to the study of the flute, then scarcely known, and attained a great proficiency on this his favourite instrument. He went to Paris in 1702; to London in 1705. He established in 1710 a weekly concert of amateurs at his own apartments (in Hart Street, Covent Garden); and his gains from these and his lessons, and the sale of his music enabled him to amass a sum said to be of £16,000, which was found hidden away after his death. Loeillet was a good performer on the harpsichord. His compositions are lively and joyous, as is evident in his 'Courante,' and in his 'Gigue' also, both in G minor.

GIGUE.



His uncommon partiality for the flute appears in them, and flute music seems to be introduced in a way that gives originality to the pieces for the harpsichord, and has a charming effect.

COURANTE.

In France, there had been a family of musicians who succeeded each other for a period approaching two centuries. These were the Couperins, of whom the first was born in 1630, at Chame, in Brie, who came early to Paris, where he died at the age of thirty-five. He was organist at the church of St Gervais, as well as of the chapel of King Louis XIII.

Ten members of this family illustrated the art from 1650 to 1815.

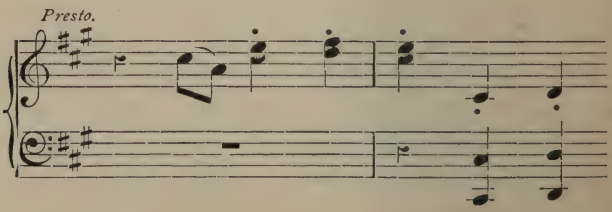
The sixth of these, François Couperin, called 'the

Great,' on account of his superiority over all other French performers on the clavecin, was born in Paris in 1668, and died there in 1733. He was, like his predecessors, organist of the church of St Gervais, and of the chapel royal, being also clavecinist to the royal chamber. He is the only Couperin whose compositions command the attention of artists. At the epoch in which he lived, the most depraved taste reigned everywhere in music, and that real gracefulness of style, which later dominated in the arts, was preceded by a morbid affectation.

True refinement belongs only to the man of culture, but for him who is deficient in mental training, there is danger that his attempt at elegance may fall into the grotesque—like the ass, in the fable, who wished to imitate the pet dog. And it is so through everything. And François Couperin, though superior to it himself, had little chance of ameliorating this state of things; while we can judge of the extremely bad taste he had to combat, even by the titles of some of the pieces for the clavecin written by him. 'La Fleurie,' 'The Flowret,' 'La tendre Nanette,' 'La Tenébreuse,' 'Les Charmes,' etc., etc. Among these pieces I consider 'La Favorita' has exquisite feeling, 'La Bandoline' is a pleasing rural inspiration, and 'Les Papillons' a pretty example of lightness of touch.

About a score of years later, in Italy, the fame of Dominico Scarlatti was at its height, he being the greatest known clavecinist. Born at Naples in 1683, he died in 1757. He was the son of Alexandre Scarlatti, the greatest Italian composer of that time, and one whose fecundity is astonishing. Alexandre composed 112 or 115 operas, and a vast amount of chamber music and of sacred music, besides nearly 200 masses. Considering the restrictions imposed by the rules for the opera and for the mass at this period, it is difficult to conceive of such a facility in composition. His son Dominico had also in abundance the gift of inspiration, but was still more distinguished as an instrumentalist. He instructed the Princess of Asturias, and lived for eleven years at the Spanish Court, and it is not ascertained if he died in Madrid or Naples.

All the works of Scarlatti (Dominico) are worthy of note; but I will here call attention especially to the Sonata in A.



This sonata is charming, though written in the

strictest style. But I would observe that it is by no means the sonata, as we have learnt to know it. This one belongs still to the period when the word 'sonata' was simply a derivative of *suonare* (to sound), and conveyed no idea of a fixed plan of composition. It is a melodious 'divertissement,' and not a poem, and it is written by an executant who wishes to make execution appreciated.

And from Italy there is yet another name of renown which must be noted here; a name which is heard across the centuries, losing nothing of its glory, whatever may have been the changes to which the art has since been subject—that of Archangelo Corelli. The great artist who bore it, was celebrated both as a composer for the harpsichord, and as a performer on the violin, and had a marked influence on the development of the art; wherefore although especially a violinist, he takes his place properly in these pages.

Corelli was born in 1653, at Fusignano, near Imola, in the territory of Bologna. He visited Germany and Paris when his studies were concluded; then he returned to settle in Rome, where he died in 1713.

Corelli had so lofty a style, and his execution was, for that period, so prodigious, that his contemporary critics, and even the bitterest among

them, designated him the prince of all musicians, and the Orpheus of his time. But his modesty and diffidence were intense, and brought him into adventures of a strangely painful nature.

On one occasion the King of Naples had sent for him to the Court, and he had met with all the appreciation his great talent should command, when one evening he played his fifth concerto, an admirable work. The king, no doubt, somewhat disaffected towards him, appeared to find the adagio too long, and quitted the hall. Poor, sensitive Corelli was so disconcerted that he could proceed no further, and ceased to play.

Another time he was requested to conduct the performance of a work by Alexandre Scarlatti, which was to be given before the king. It happened that this composer did not know the violin, and had written a passage with impossible fingering, and therefore very difficult of execution when read off at first sight. Corelli reached the part without observing it ; he failed in the passage, and had the mortification of hearing Petrillo, chief of the Neapolitan orchestra, who had studied the piece, play it correctly. This was followed by a chant in C minor ; Corelli, utterly distressed, played it in the major key, ' Ricommenciamo ' (let us begin again), said Scarlatti with his accustomed gentleness. Corelli began again, but again in the major,

and Scarlatti was obliged to call him to his side, to explain the key and set him right.

Immediately afterwards Corelli quitted Naples, such was his confusion at this trivial accident.

On returning to Rome, however, he found the public favour was engrossed by a player on the hautboy, just arrived, and then, soon after, by one Valentini, a violinist, whose playing and compositions were of very inferior order. The great artist was so deeply affected by this temporary desertion, that a profound melancholy took possession of him and shortened his life.

Every honour which he had so well deserved was, however, paid to his memory. Alas! what tardy justice! coming too late to save; how often is this debt paid only at the grave!

And in the artist, what ingenuous sensitiveness! With all these men, how entirely they are devoted to their art! how truly was it the essence of their lives, and how well we can understand, of each one, that his music was the history of his soul—and the legacy that he has bequeathed to posterity.

CHAPTER II.

MUSIC UNDER THE RULES—THE HARMONISTS —1650 TO 1750.

THE same year that Dominico Scarlatti was born in Italy, 1683, ushered into life Rameau, the greatest of French composers, and the author of the first system of harmony ever written. Jean Philippe Rameau was born at Dijon, 25th September 1683. His parents were musical, and early taught him the rudiments of the art, in which he was so wonderfully gifted that, at the age of seven, he could read and play off all kinds of music on the clavecin. But his parents destined him for the magistracy; his musical studies were stopped, and he was sent to college. Rameau was born to be a musician and nothing else. He was so unmanageable, so violent, and preoccupied with musical ideas, which led him to be ever filling his own and his school-fellows' copy-books with notes and bars of musical fragments, and he promised to do so little credit to his college, that he was sent back to

his parents. He did not even know how to spell, till later on, at eighteen, he learnt spelling for love, the lady of his fancy having rallied him on the subject of his ignorance.

His father sent him to Italy. He went to Milan; but, accustomed to the French style of music, he understood nothing of that of Scarlatti and of Lotti, and, eager to return to France, he consented to engage himself as first violin to the director of a theatre, which he accompanied to Marseilles, Nimes, Lyons, Alby, etc. Rameau revisited these cities at intervals, and thus laid the foundation of his reputation as an organist. How remarkable must his talent have been to attract the attention of the public already; and yet it was only during this wandering period of his life that he learnt the rule of the octave for the accompaniment of the clavecin.

Fired with ambition, he came to Paris at the age of thirty-four, rich in experience, but having produced nothing as yet. As soon as his genius for composition, as well as for performing on the organ, became known there, such a jealousy was excited that he found himself surrounded by difficulties, and not having the means to live without employment, he was obliged to accept the post of organist at Lille. Soon after, his brother vacated, in his favour, that of the Cathedral of Clermont in

the Auvergne. In the tranquillity of this peaceful city, surrounded by fine mountains, it was that Rameau conceived and wrote down his treatise on harmony, at the same time composing numerous cantatas and pieces for the clavecin, which, if we consider the date, exhibit originality of thought and style. He passed four years at Clermont, and now feeling that the moment was ripe for his appearance in the musical world, he wished to return to Paris. But he was bound by a compact to the Chapter of the Cathedral of Clermont, and was not rich enough to cancel this, by a payment. He thereupon conceived the idea of bringing about his release by deafening the ears of bishop and canons with barbarous music, and in consequence they very quickly granted him the wished-for freedom from his engagement. On the eve of the day fixed for his departure, however, in order not to leave an unpleasing impression of his talent, his performance was such as to excite only the most lively regret.

Once more in Paris in 1721, he busied himself about his 'Treatise on Harmony,' which appeared the following year. This work, although hardly understood, occasioned a vast amount of criticism. It is curious to observe that the science of harmony, though only now discovered by Rameau, was so much required, that all the world immediately set

itself to discuss, to dispute, to talk it over, as if it were the simplest matter, and perfectly known.

Criticism, however, but brought the author more and more into notice, and attracted to him a large number of pupils, who became his admirers. Rameau had yet to struggle on for several years before he attained to the French stage, in spite of his disputes with the learned men of the day, which had created such a sensation, that his name had now attained a position of the highest prominence.

Still, Rameau was mortified to find himself approaching the age of fifty years without having achieved opera, when he became teacher of music to Madame La Popelinière, wife of the 'Fermier Génèral.' This rich man was his Mæcenas. He obtained for him librettos of operas, supported him through the fierce contest brought against him by the admirers of Lulli, and the great annoyance this occasioned Rameau, so that the latter, of whom it had been said,—

> 'Si le difficile est le beau,
> C'est un grand homme que Rameau,
> Mais, si le beau par aventure
> N'était que la simple nature
> Quel petit homme que Rameau!'

reigned without a rival over the French stage for the last thirty years of his life. He composed

twenty-two operas, found his name famous, his compositions known, his writings admired and accepted by all Europe, and died, full of honours, at the ripe age of eighty-one, at Paris, 12th September 1764. He was accorded a magnificent funeral, and for some years the anniversary of his death was celebrated.

His 'Treatise on Harmony' held its place for a hundred years.

Rameau was not amiable in disposition, nor was he attractive in appearance. He was extremely tall and thin, gloomy, not sociable, reserved and silent even in his own family. He would walk out alone unobservant of every one. It was supposed that he was in deep thought, but, by his own confession, it appeared that his mind indulged in vague reverie, while the seeming activity was in his limbs only. If a friend accosted him, rousing him from his trance, he failed to recognise the person till reminded by mention of the name.

He has been described as miserly by Grimm, who wrote an exaggerated portrait of his character. It is, however, known of him that he was capable of kindly assisting his fellow musicians.

We find that the names of his pieces for the clavecin are pleasing—such as 'Musette,' 'Rappel des Oiseaux,' 'Sarabande.' Moreover these com-

positions are simple, *naïves*, not seeking to produce only effects, but, like himself, quite natural; also of a more cultivated style than any of his predecessors had had an idea of.

The dynasty which was truly extraordinary and unique was, however, that of the Bach family. Fifty persons of the name illustrated the art of music, and were all eminent, as they deserved to be; passing on their talent and attainments for generations, during a period of two hundred years.

The head of this wonderful family, Veit Bach, at one time a baker at Presburg (born 1550-60), having, in order to escape religious persecution, to leave that city, went to Wechmar, a village of Saxe-Gotha, and settled there as a miller.

Here it was that he imparted his love of music to his two sons, and it is from hence sprung the long line of musicians of this far-famed name, which has no parallel; unless, perhaps, in that other line, less deeply inscribed on the pages of the art, but nearly contemporary, that of Couperin.

An interesting custom of the Bach family, when, owing to its increasing numbers, it had become somewhat dispersed, was the reunion of all its members once a year, now at Erfurt, now at Eisenach, or at Arnstadt, and sometimes as many as a hundred and twenty persons, men and women

and children would meet, all bearing the name of Bach. Their pleasure was music, and musical exercises, in which all took part. They began by singing a sacred hymn, then they took for themes popular airs and songs, and improvised on these, making variations in four, five, or six parts. These improvisations, which were called 'quodlibets,' were in use long before the Bachs, and it is probably to them that the German people of the lower classes owe their reputation for natural musical talent.

We can realise how numerous were the members of this family when we think of the fact that the third grandson of Veit Bach, Henri Bach, who lived from 1615 to 1692, saw, before his death, his two elder sons, several grandsons, and twenty-eight great-grandsons all musicians and professors of music.

But, however admirable the first members of this family may have been, their glories sank into the shade before the prodigious brilliancy of the genius of Jean Sebastian Bach, the greatest, the most fertile, the most astonishing genius that the world has seen, and who would have still been alone in it, and without a rival, had not Beethoven lived.

He was born at Eisenach, 21st March 1685. Left an orphan at ten years old, he was obliged to

seek an asylum with his elder brother, the organist at Ordruff, who gave him his first lessons on the harpsichord. Through his extraordinary power he made such rapid progress, that, soon, all that they gave him to play was too easy for him. His passion for music led him to make the greatest possible efforts to procure the works which he desired to study. To give an example :—

His brother possessed a book which contained pieces by the great clavecinists of the time—Frohberger, Fisher, T. G. de Kerl, Pachelbel, Buxtehude, Bruhus, Bahm,—which he kept carefully concealed. Young Sebastian, who had frequently asked him for this in vain, impelled by his intense longing to see the work, discovered a way to pass his little hand through the grating of the cupboard in which it was locked up, to turn the lock and take it out. But now, it was neces sary for him to copy it. Not having candles to light him, he had to take six months to write it out by moonlight! Alas! Hardly had he obtained possession of this precious copy, so laboriously earned, when his brother, having discovered it, ruthlessly took it away from him. This brother dying, and leaving him without means, Sebastian engaged himself as a chorister in a church at Erdemann. And from thence, at the cost of the greatest privations, he visited Hamburg, Lüne-

burg, Weimar, where he heard perform the masters of the time. Then, at the age of nineteen, he became organist of the church of Arnstadt, and from that moment he was able to procure for himself the works of the first organists, and to study them as much as he would.

I should have to lengthen out this chapter considerably to give a biography worthy of Sebastian Bach. It must suffice us at present to state that he was marvellous as an organist, as a composer, and as a performer on the harpsichord. His hands had an inconceivable agility, flexibility and equality; and those pieces, which were merely trifles to him, now cost us long hours of labour, and even then we find difficulty in playing them with the swiftness at which he took them. At the organ, his feet also were extraordinarily active. But the principal characteristics were the simplicity of manners, the modesty of Bach—and, at the same time, his contempt for works of emotion or imagination only. Melody, as we understand it, appeared to him unworthy of the name of music. 'We are going to hear the Dresden tunes,' he said to his son, when they were invited to the concerts of the court. It was his earnest nature that made his style simple and severe. Besides, he was entirely unaware of his own genius. 'How is it you come to have such a splendid talent?'

he was asked. 'By working hard,' he replied; 'and anyone who works so, can do as much as I do.' He was a kind husband; the father of twenty children by his two wives; his life was retired from the world, calm, regular, and of austere simplicity. He was far from rich, in consequence of his numerous family, although earning plenty by his enormous labour.

He scorned a popularity which would have given him success, and by which his fortune would have been quickly made — he desired only the appreciation of highly cultivated minds. Bach made his genius, lofty and austere as it was, reflect itself in this well-disciplined life. Living far from great cities, he was unaware of the changes going on in the musical art. Although of matchless fecundity, yet it can be said of him, he never allowed himself the full play of the imaginative qualities. He was strong, fluent, sublime and always simple.

It seems strange to us that, although Bach had a very wide reputation,—so much so, that, once when his son had insisted on his coming to the Court of Prussia, Frederick II., seeing his name one evening on the list of strangers just arrived, exclaimed, 'Gentlemen, the elder Bach is here,' gave up the concert for that night, sent for Sebastian, made him appear without changing his tra-

velling dress, and received him with honour,—it is strange, I say, that after all his contemporaries were not really aware of the immense force of his genius.

Moreover, Bach, of his own act, condemned many of his works to obliteration (during his life), for they were heard only at the moment of their completion by the composer. This over, he arranged his manuscripts in his cupboard, from which they were not again disturbed.

And after his death his immortal works remained unrecognised until 1788—the epoch when Mozart, then at the height of his fame, passing through Leipzig, heard a 'motet' composed by Bach. 'Thank Heaven, here is something new,' cried the great artist; 'and I learn something from this!' He asked for the other parts of the work, but they were not to be found. Mozart laid out the separate pages—the parts of the score—upon chairs and tables, and passed several hours in contemplating this 'new thing,' which dated back nearly sixty years.

The ardent bent for study which had made Bach labour so fervently through many long nights had impaired his sight; and before the close of his life he was almost blind. He died 30th July 1750.

For us pianists 'le Clavécin bien tempéré' ought to be a *Vade mecum.* We cannot sufficiently

meditate upon it, and work at it, whether for ideas or for the mechanical part of the art. This succession of Preludes and Fugues, in all keys, stands alone in the world for technical science, both for the mind and for the fingers.

The style of John Sebastian Bach is traceable in the works of his favourite pupil Louis Krebs.

Krebs was born at Büttelschaft, October 10, 1713; taught by his father the first elements of music and harpsichord, he went, 1726, to the school of St Thomas, Leipzig, conducted under Sebastian Bach; and there Krebs, after nine years' instruction, entered latterly the especial class of Bach, and became the pupil preferred by him to all others. At the university he took up a course of philosophy. The musicians of those days, as we see, pursued with ardour various branches of knowledge; considering that a man could not be too highly educated to deserve the name of artist. There was then no superficial art, either in singing or playing, as in our day.

Krebs became organist at Zwickau in 1737; then at the castle of Zeitz, and in 1756 he filled a similar post at the Court of Altenburg, and died there in 1780, aged sixty-seven.

Sebastian Bach thought highly of his talent, and was fond of saying, in allusion to his own name and that of Krebs, 'There is but one *crab*

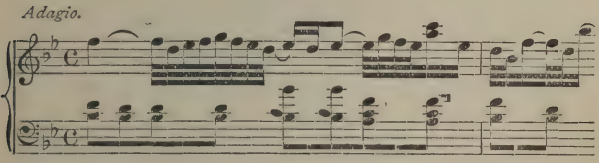
in all the brook.' (In German the word 'Bach' is brook, and a crab 'Krebs.')

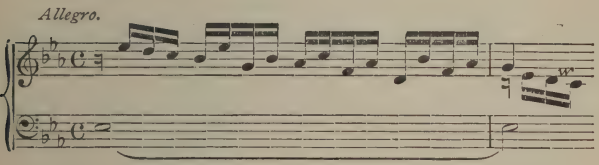
His compositions of Krebs for the 'Klavier' contain examples of the 'Partita.' Here the word 'Partita' appears to mean *uniting*. In fact, it is the uniting of tunes—of the dances of the period. It begins always with a prelude, an air, or a fugue. Then comes an 'Allemande,' a movement simple and grave in character, of German origin, as its name indicates. It is short, and has only two parts, like the dance airs, although it is not a dance. Then a 'Courante' (corrente, Italian), a dance of French origin, from the word *courir*, although it is of moderate rapidity. A Sarabande, another somewhat slow dance of Spanish origin. A Bourrée (bourlesca, Italian), a dance of the Auvergne peasants, and supposed to originate in the Pyrenees—that is, in the ancient Vasconia; and one or more minuets, the well-known French dance; and at last a 'Gigue,' an English dance.

In reading off this list of dances it must not be supposed that the music composed for them was light or playful. No; but short themes were required, and as dances consist of only eight bars for the *motifs*, they exactly suited the scholastic form.

Here they had the 'quodlibets' *worked up*, instead of the 'quodlibets' *improvised*.

Thus the 'Partitas' of Krebs are extremely interesting, even grave in character, and betray nothing of the dance, but the name and the rhythm. They are each a *study*, in the full acceptation of the word. Take as an example the one that begins thus—

PRELUDE.

or this again—



To recapitulate what I said * concerning the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, music had during the period scarcely quitted the Church (for the composers for the *clavecin* were all essentially organists), but its emancipation had begun. Music has now taken a form, and is passing from the first rules laid down for 'the key' to the most complicated of modulations, but it bears the stamp of those times, when the life of the musician was simple,

* Part I. Chap. iii.

studious, and full of genial good-nature ; when he, belonging to the middle class, like it, had not yet been moved by tumultuous passions, such as had excited the higher classes, and the older arts. During the eighteenth century we shall find our art will quickly develop, become more powerful, and leaving other arts far behind, will prove herself, of all, the most eloquent interpreter of the deepest and strongest passions of men.

CHAPTER III.

FREE MUSIC—THE MELODISTS—1700 TO 1800.

IT was in the eighteenth century that melody invaded the realm of instrumental music.

Another change which we note at this period is in the position of the Clavecinist. He has now a distinct calling, no longer joined to that of the organist, and the Clavecinist presently becomes the pianist.

It is in one of the many sons of Sebastian Bach that we find the first real melodist, and the father of the sonata as we know it. It was then considered to be written in the 'Free Style,' that is to say, in what was quite distinct from the rules of the Fugue. It is remarkable that of four sons of Sebastian Bach, two of them, William Friedman, the eldest, and John Christopher Frederick, the third, were inspired by the same taste as their illustrious father; and the two others, Charles Philip Emanuel, the second (the melodist alluded to above), as well as John Christian, the eleventh

son, and the fourth musician, were melodists by nature and by feeling, and, in spite of their education, employed every means in their power to create and to extend modern forms, even to the 'Bagatelles,' the contemptuous term used by Sebastian Bach to designate Italian Opera, and all music that was exclusively founded on the imagination.

'Music under the rules' was so called when a short *motif* formed the foundation for combinations that were purely mathematical, and 'Free Music' was the expression of a sentiment by means of a melody.

To be aware of this distinction is of the highest importance to our comprehending the period on which we are now entering: and these two forms of composition, like two streams separating from the same river, continued henceforth to flow in entirely different channels.

Carl Philip Emanuel Bach was born at Weimar, on 14th March 1714. He is sometimes designated as 'Bach of Berlin' on account of his having lived in that city for twenty-nine years.

He began the study of music at the school of St Thomas at Leipzig. His father then took him under his own direction, and for some years taught him the clavecin and composition. He went through a course of jurisprudence at Leipzig, which

he concluded at Frankfort on the Oder. He founded in the latter city an Academy of Music, which he himself conducted. In 1738 he went to Berlin, and in 1740 he entered the service of Frederick the Great. In 1767 he was offered the position of Director of Music at Hamburg, to succeed Telleman.

Emanuel met with the greatest difficulties in endeavouring to break away from the kind of slavery he had to endure at the Prussian Court, since, although not himself a Prussian born, and being, therefore, a free man, yet as he had married in Berlin, his wife and children could not leave Prussia without the permission of the Government, of which they were subjects. The remembrance of what he suffered on that occasion made him prize so highly the liberty he enjoyed at Hamburg, that he never would accept any offer, which was afterwards made him, by the different princes of Germany.

Emanuel Bach, moreover, was not happy, though he had ample means, for his artist soul was bathed in bitterness. Accustomed as they were in Germany to the scientific style of composition, more or less heavy, though harmonious, Emanuel's music, full of novelty, of grace, and of elasticity, and especially removed from the rigidity of 'the rules,' was not esteemed as it deserved, and it was only in France and in England that his high merit was

duly appreciated. It is, however, this same style of his which, carried onward to perfection by Haydn and Mozart, has since delighted all Europe. The injustice of his countrymen was long the torment of Bach, who was conscious of his own genius. But as he said to Dr Burney,—'Since I reached the age of fifty I have given up all ambition. I said to myself, let us live happy, for to-morrow we die! and so you see me reconciled to my position!' Sad words! which indeed every one gifted with genius has to pronounce, at some period of his life, for it is seldom that such a man is understood by his contemporaries.

This his sorrow is always recurring in some short phrase of his music, and gives to the creations of Emanuel a peculiar and pathetic character. His compositions for the 'Klavier' numbered nearly three hundred, and his book on the art of playing it was highly valued.

He died the 14th December 1788.

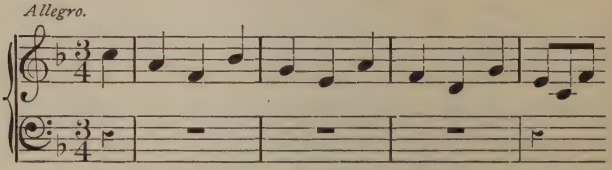
I have yet a few more words about the Bachs. William Friedman, the eldest of Sebastian's sons, finding that he could not endure the dependent position of being a chapel-master to some exalted personage, gave up all official employment for no other reason but a jealous sensitiveness for the dignity of the artist; and wounded in spirit, he died of disappointment at Berlin in 1784.

Among the four musical brothers, all the good fortune fell to the share of John Christian, whose natural taste for melody found a successful career in the theatre. He lived for a time in Italy, married an Italian 'cantatrice,' and came to London in 1759. He was appointed musician to the queen, master of her chapel, and died in London 1782, after a run of brilliant success.

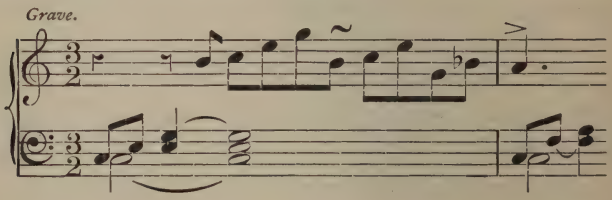
It was in one of his operas, 'Orion; or, Diana Avenged,' that the clarionet was first heard in England.

A theorist of considerable talent was William Marpurg, born at Seehausen in the Old Mark of Brandenburg in 1718. Little is known of his life, except that, after having studied ancient and modern languages, mathematics and music, he visited Paris in 1746, and there made the acquaintance of Rameau. Returning to Berlin, Marpurg was for a time secretary to a minister, then he lived in Hamburg, but was afterwards nominated director of the lottery at Berlin, and had the title of Councillor to the King of Prussia. He passed forty years without other emotion than might attend the drawing of the lottery, without other sorrows than might be caused by losses in administering the said lottery, when the drawings were not lucky. But his mind was active; to his old age he retained his gaiety and genial nature;

he was a large man, fond of the good things of this life, and lived to be seventy-seven. His death took place May 1795. Marpurg was a critic of the first order, and of vast knowledge in the theories of the art. His writings are very numerous. His works upon harmony and on fingering should be in every hand. His compositions for the harpsichord are interesting. For example, take a Caprice—



A prelude and another Caprice—



His name is one that it would not have been possible to leave unmentioned, in speaking of the principal musicians of the eighteenth century.

We have next to occupy ourselves with another contemporary of Emanuel Bach, as also of Mar-

purg, a man who brought about great improvement in harmony, and whose compositions for the harpsichord are full of charming passages, who has natural good taste, and a certain elegance and naïveté of expression. This is John Philip Kirnberger, born 21st April 1721, at Saalfëld, in Thuringia. In his native city he learnt the elements of music and to play the harpsichord and violin. He carried his studies further at Grafenrade under the organist (J. B. Kellner); and at Sondershausen, where he had lessons from Meil on the violin; then at Dresden, where he had the good fortune to remain for two years under the tuition of Sebastian Bach. In 1751 he returned to Germany, and, though thirty years old, resumed the study of the violin in order to enter, as symphonist, the chapel of Frederick the Great at Berlin. He obtained this post and kept it till 1784, when he gained permission from the king to pass on into the service of Prince Henry. Later the Princess Amelia took him for her instructor in composition and director of music, a position which he occupied for the last twenty years of his life. He died at Berlin, 1789, after a long and painful illness. His influence was of service to the art as a didactic writer and as a theorist. Kirnberger was author of a system of 'temperament'—a method of tuning the harpsichord and piano by

compensation—which was used for a long time. There is now a simpler plan.

But Kirnberger's chief glory was to have been the first to understand well the general system of prolonging notes on the procession of chords and the modifications thus introduced. By this he opened out the science and contributed greatly to its advance. Kirnberger has the double merit of being a learned composer and a melodist also,—a union very rarely found. But his writings are more *learned* than they are *free*, and it is with pleasure we meet the melodist in his 'Divertissements'—the generic name given at that time to all pieces for the harpsichord, whatever their distinctive names — 'Partita,' 'Sarabande,' 'Minuet,' 'Caprice,' or even 'Sonata.'

The form styled 'Sonata' had latterly been created by Emanuel Bach; it was definitely regulated by Clementi, and became the accepted type of all works of a certain importance written for the piano *solo*, or for piano and violin or violoncello, and, indeed, for all classical works.

And here, as we pause to consider, it becomes evident that our Art, young as she is still, has passed her childhood. The rules and discipline of scientific composition are, in a sense, set aside. Imagination has conquered all resistance, and completely asserts itself. The sacred 'music of the

Church' treasures up its riches. The 'music of the world' will now have its own to store. But Imagination must recollect the past, and must return to the maternal and tender hand of Scholastic Wisdom to be attired, adorned by it, and rendered doubly beautiful, because stronger and more powerful than without it were possible.

Muzio Clementi, the pianist *par excellence*, and whose name must be dear to the English, was born at Rome in 1752. His father, who was a goldsmith, being fond of music, gave his son every opportunity of cultivating the art. At nine years of age Clementi offered himself for the post of organist by competition, and obtained it after having fulfilled the conditions imposed, which consisted of accompanying a figured bass, taken from the works of Corelli, and transposing it in different keys. He was afterwards placed under Santarelli, an excellent singing-master. Two years later he went to the school of Carpini, who was considered the best counterpointest then in Rome. He continued his studies there till he was fourteen, when an Englishman, named Beckford, heard him perform, and was so delighted with his talent that he requested his father to allow him to be entrusted with the young artist, promising to watch over his fortunes. This being agreed to, Muzio accompanied his new protector, and lived with him in

Dorsetshire, studying the masters till he attained the age of eighteen, when he had become so accomplished that he surpassed all his contemporaries on the harpsichord, and had composed his 'Op. 2d,' which became the type of the sonata. C. Philip Emanuel Bach spoke of this work with the highest commendation.

The renown he acquired by this work obliged him to quit the retirement of his country home and to appear in London. He was immediately appointed conductor at the opera, and had thus the opportunity of constantly hearing the first singers of the day—by which his own style was improved and elevated, and his ideas enlarged. About 1780 he went to Paris, and had the honour of playing before the Queen, who showed the highest satisfaction with his performance. Struck by the contrast between the French impetuous expression of pleasure and the cold approbation he had received in England, he often remarked afterwards he could hardly believe himself the same man. In 1781 he visited Vienna, where he met Haydn and Mozart, with other celebrated masters of the time. The Emperor, Joseph II., often made him appear at court, and would sometimes pass a whole evening alone with Mozart and Clementi, making them play by turns. Again returning to England, and the following year to Paris, he came

back to London and remained there until 1802. In 1800 the bankruptcy of the house of Longman and Broderip having occasioned him the loss of a considerable sum, Clementi, on the advice, and by the help of certain rich bankers and friends, formed an association for the manufacture of pianos (which had now been introduced for some years), and gave up teaching, in order to devote himself to the undertaking. From 1802 to 1810 Clementi again visited Paris, then Vienna, Berlin, and St Petersburg, Rome, Milan, etc., etc. He married at Berlin, became a widower, travelled again to divert his thoughts, married again on his return to England, about 1811, and from that time settled down to live in quiet. Having become extremely rich, he gave up his house of business to his partner, Mr Collard, retired to a sumptuous country seat, and seldom was seen in London afterwards.

On Clementi's last visit, he was invited by Cramer, Moscheles, and several other artists to a banquet, given in honour of the patriarch of the piano, when he was persuaded to play to them once more. He improvised before them, and the freshness of his ideas, as well as the perfection of his execution, both astonished his hearers and excited their admiration. But it was the song of the swan, and soon afterwards Clementi died, at the age of eighty, March 1832.

Clementi is the leader of the best school for execution, and he has fixed unalterably the laws of fingering; Hummel, Czerny, and even Mendelssohn could only follow on this head. But although he lived quite in our own day, his style remains what it was at the epoch of his studies—that is to say, without true sensibility and simply graceful.

The famous 'Toccata,' which was his 'Gradus ad Parnassum,' shows not only the great talent of the pianist, but also how classical is Clementi, speaking of him as a master of a certain school, which does not mean the founder of a school. The one is a person well taught, learned in the rules, with good method, the excellent professor, and of admirable talent. The other is 'the genius.' Clementi was successful in forming his pupils, who became classical in their work—in the same sense as was their master. John Field, Cramer, Zenner, Klengel, Kalkbrenner, and others less known, were admirable professors of the mechanical part of playing the piano, exemplifying the rules of taste as well as that school could do so. However, without doubt, Clementi belongs to the melodists, for he very rarely used scientific forms, but kept to those laws only which co-ordinate all good composition.

CHAPTER IV.

HAYDN AND MOZART—1750 TO 1800.

AT length we reach the period, glowing with aurora-tinted light, unlike any other in the history of our musical art, as of other arts,—the 'epoch of the rose,' characterised by two masters who are indeed the beloved of men of all epochs—Haydn and Mozart.

Francis Joseph Haydn, whose name awakes in us the remembrance of the perfection of idealic expression, and who, with all his imagination, showed himself the scholar still, and ever loyal to the laws of his art, was born at Rohrau, on the confines of Austria and Hungary, 31st March 1732. His father, Matthias Haydn, was a poor wheelwright; and at the same time magistrate, sacristan and organist, had a beautiful tenor voice, and played the harp. His great pleasure on a Sunday, was to sing with his wife and play the harp. When scarcely five years old, the little Joseph wished to take part in these concerts. A piece of wood

figured for a violin, a cane for the bow, and as he could make no sound, he set himself to beat the time. The exactness of his rhythm struck his cousin Frank, a schoolmaster at Hainburg, who offered to take charge of and teach him. The parents accepted the proposal joyfully. Haydn, as he afterwards said, received here 'more flogging than food,' but the severity of the teacher caused him to make rapid progress, for in three years he learnt the principles of music, reading, writing, the elements of Latin, those of singing, of playing the violin, the harpsichord and other instruments. At eight years old he was heard by Reuter, chapel-master at St Stephen's, at Vienna, who took him away from there, and made him enter the choir of the cathedral. Here he continued till his nineteenth year, when he was dismissed, and was obliged henceforth to provide for himself. But in this dismissal, which came about in a somewhat violent manner, one cannot but recognise the feeling of jealousy which actuated Reuter for a talent which he knew was superior to his own. For a waggish trick played off on a school-fellow, he was turned out of doors at seven o'clock on a November night, without money and in ragged clothes. He fell in with a wig-maker named Keller, who, very poor himself, for he had but one room for wife and children on the fifth storey and a garret on the

sixth, yet offered him the garret, and the proposal was gratefully accepted. Haydn, later on, indemnified Keller generously, and eventually married his daughter, with whom he was not happy.

From the age of thirteen Haydn had felt the longing to compose. He showed his first attempts to Reuter, who told him, laughing, that he ought first to learn how to write before thinking of producing anything. Haydn, although saddened by the remark, felt its justice. But how learn? He could not pay a master. He resolved, however, to apply for money to his father. The good wheelwright, by an effort, managed to send him six florins, which enabled him to acquire the 'Gradus ad Parnassum' of Fux, and the 'Perfect Chapelmaster,' by Mathison. These two works were for a long period his only instructors. Whilst he was still in his garret, the six first sonatas of Philip Emanuel Bach fell into his hands. Let us hear what he says himself of this time when a harpsichord in ruins, his Fux, his Mathison and his Bach's Sonatas were all he possessed in the world.

'Seated at my harpsichord, gnawed by rats, I envied not the lot of kings. I did not stir till I had played the whole of the sonatas from beginning to end. Those who know me thoroughly will find that I am under great obligations to Emanuel; that I have even caught his style, and

I have carefully studied him. He once complimented me on this himself.'

His connection with Porpora occurred also at this period of his life. The old master was at the house of the Venetian Ambassador, where Metastasio introduced young Haydn to accompany the singing. Haydn, who understood how great a benefit to him would be a few lessons from Porpora, exerted himself to get into his good graces. Every morning he was up early, brushed the coat, cleaned the shoes, and in very best style arranged the wig of the old musician, who frequently repaid him only by abuse. In the end, however, the patience and wonderful good nature of the volunteer lacquey touched him, and he gave him valuable counsel. The ambassador, surprised at the progress the young man made in his art, soon gave him a pension of six sequins per month (about £3). Haydn wrote some short sonatas, which were soon scattered about the world, unknown to him, for the musicsellers had got hold of them and published them without asking his permission. Haydn was only too happy to see his own name in print, and never thought of reaping any further advantage, as proprietorship in music did not then exist. One of these sonatas by chance fell into the hands of the Countess of Thun, a lady of quality, who passionately loved music. She wished to know the

author, but her agents had some difficulty in discovering him. At last Haydn was brought to her, and she, surprised by his poor appearance, exclaimed,—'It was Mr Haydn that I inquired for.' 'I am he, madame,' replied he. 'But I mean the author of this sonata!' 'And I am he, madame.' An explanation followed. The countess encouraged him, made him a present of twenty-one ducats, took him as her instructor for the harpsichord and for singing, procured him other pupils among the ladies of quality like herself, and Joseph Haydn was no longer in poverty!

It was for the Baron von Fürnberg, to whom he used to go to perform music, that Haydn wrote his first quatuor. Soon after, he composed a serenade for three instruments, which he performed under the windows of the celebrated Harlequin Kurz. Struck by the originality of the music that he heard, Kurz came down into the street. 'Who is it that composed that music?' he asked. 'I did,' replied Haydn. 'What! you—at your age?' 'One must begin with something,' said Haydn. 'It is extraordinary! Come upstairs.' Haydn followed the Harlequin, and in a few minutes came out again with the libretto of the 'Diable Boiteux.' He wrote the music for his comic opera in a few days. The work was successful, and he made by it 130 florins. His

productions multiplied—his name became widely known. At the age of twenty-seven he became second chapel-master to Count Mortzin, for whose orchestra he wrote his first symphony.

I will relate here, for the sake of showing the position which great artists held at this time in the households of grandees who showed them patronage, the entrance of Joseph Haydn into the service of Prince Anthony of Esterhazy. This prince, having heard Haydn's symphony, requested Count Mortzin to give him up to him, and he had consented; but Haydn being indisposed, and therefore not being immediately presented to him, the prince had entirely forgotten him. Friedberg, leader of the orchestra of Prince Esterhazy, and an admirer of Haydn's genius, advised him to write a symphony which should be performed on the prince's birthday at his residence at Eisenstadt. Haydn wrote the symphony (the 5th of Op. I.). The day arrived. The prince, surrounded by his little court (for we might say the Hungarian lords of that day had their court), was present at the concert. The symphony began —but hardly had it reached the middle of the first allegro when the prince interrupted, asking who was the author of so fine a work. 'Here he is!' replies Friedberg, presenting the trembling Haydn. 'What! is the music by this Moor?' (Haydn's

complexion was very dark.) 'Well, Moor, from henceforth you are in my service. What is your name?' 'Joseph Haydn!' 'Oh! I remember the name; you are already of my household. How is it I have not seen you before?' Annoyed by the haughty tone of the prince and the glitter around him, Joseph dared not reply. 'Go and get yourself dressed,' the prince added; 'you are now chapel-master. I cannot have you in this state; you are too short; your face is too plain: get a new coat, a wig with curls, frills and red heels — but the heels must be high, that your stature may better correspond with your merit. You understand — go, and everything shall be given you!'

What indignation is roused within us when we think of such language as this being addressed to such a genius—to the father of the symphony! But it was thus that the magnates of Hungary in those days testified their 'favour to great artists!'

Haydn retired to a corner of the orchestra, dreaming only with some regret of the loss of his hair, but also of what a fine and elegant youth he was now to turn out. The next morning he made his appearance at the 'levee' of the prince, buttoned up in his official costume, and altogether cutting the most ridiculous figure imaginable. Haydn remained twenty-one years with the Ester-

hazys, and entertained the deepest affection for Prince Nicholas, the successor of Prince Anthony.

We will not closely follow Haydn throughout the development of his renown, nor in his journeys to London. We know he was twice there; that he wrote twelve grand symphonies for the concerts of Salomon; that he had the greatest successes possible, and was covered with glory. But he could not be persuaded to settle here, and quickly flew back again to his usual modest and retired life. Before this period he had managed, during thirty years, to save but £200! After these visits, and later by the sale of the score of his 'Creation' and 'The Seasons,' he had gained £3600, and it was on the income from this sum that, after having obtained leave from Prince Esterhazy to retire from his service, he lived in a small house with a garden in Vienna (in the Faubourg Gampendorf) till the end of his days, perfectly content and happy.

Never was there a more calm and regular life than his, from the time he became chapel-master to Prince Esterhazy till his death. Every day he rose at six in the morning, dressed himself with care, sat down to a little table close to his piano, and worked till noon, when he partook of breakfast, and, as a rule, he composed every day for neither more nor less than five hours. But these five hours during thirty years give a

total of 54,000 hours, which explains to us the vast quantity of works that proceeded from his pen. Every day, in the afternoon, he had a concert, lasting an hour and a-half, at the house of the prince, and twice a week an opera in the evening. He supped at seven o'clock, and passed the rest of the evening with friends, when there was no opera.

The life of Hadyn, like that of Bach, is the reflection of his genius, and that is the reason that I have related it with some minuteness. But Hadyn's genius is that of the 'melodist,' even in his most learned combinations; and his melody is calm, unruffled, flowing, especially simple-natured and true. He has facility of expression, a sweet and tranquil charm, a reflection of a pure soul, and a cheerfulness which belongs only to him. As we listen to his music, the countenance of each of us brightens to a smile; afterwards we feel the better for what we have heard—we are rested and refreshed by it. He never lets us feel there is anything wanting; he never says too much nor too little; the proportion is always admirably kept.

No passion of any kind ever moved him, and through all his writings we can see him, in our imagination, quietly saying his beads, to invoke the inspiration, for which he has had perhaps to wait for a moment or two! Certainly, if ever the

likeness to a flower should present itself to our minds, it would be in speaking of his music, fresh, pure, bright in colouring, and which veritably perfumes the imagination.

His death was touching, and was preceded by an emotional paroxysm, such as we hardly expect in so placid a nature as his. He had attained his seventy-eighth year, and felt that his strength was ebbing. The piety which had accompanied him throughout his life was the consolation of his declining days ; still he is telling his beads and murmuring prayers, whilst his frame grows weaker.

Suddenly the war, which had been thought ended, burst forth again between France and Austria in 1809. Haydn, remembering the invasion of a few years before, and the occupation of Vienna, was terrified for the safety of his emperor. He would inquire eagerly for news, then sit down to his piano, and, with his faint and aged voice, sing the hymn he had, in the fervour of his loyalty, composed as the National Hymn, 'God preserve the Emperor Francis!'

It was in the night of the 10th May that the French marched to Vienna the second time, and came within half a league of Hadyn's garden. In the bombardment which followed, shots fell not far from his house. His servants, alarmed for him, hastened to his bedside.

'Why this alarm?' he cried to them, lighting up into new animation. 'Do you not know that, where Hadyn is, no harm can come to you?'

But he was afterwards convulsed by agitation and his weakness increased. On the 26th of May he bade his servants carry him to his piano, and three times he sang with fervour, 'God preserve the Emperor Francis,' and then fell into a state of torpor. These were the last words of Hadyn. He died the 31st May 1809, without return of consciousness.

Mozart,—born at Salzburg in 1756, dying in 1791, in his thirty-fifth year. Mozart, in his short life —which included journeys to England, the Netherlands, to France and Italy, and his remaining long enough to give concerts in each of these countries —then becoming chapel-master to the Emperor Joseph II.,—Mozart, I say, in his short life, composed such a vast number of works and of *chefs d'œuvres*, that his fertility is truly astounding. His youthfulness is reflected in his work. It is fresh, pure, happy, with an inexpressible grace and charm. It is, properly speaking, the Idyll of music. There is certainly a sadness in the instrumental music of Mozart, but this sadness is sweet, without intensity, and of short duration. It may be described as that of the shepherdess of an Arcadian epoch who has lost her sheep or her

favourite bird, but whose smile is ready to reappear, and is perhaps shining through her tears.

Ought I to sadden my readers by telling the cause of the productivity of Mozart, which he himself, when dying, bitterly regretted? When, as he finished on his death-bed his immortal Requiem, and heard a friend speaking of the grandeur of his work, he replied, 'Yes! I die too young, and at the moment when I am only beginning to *be able* to work.' Alas! it was poverty that drove his pen so fast, and there was no time to alter and correct the pages which were destined to supply the daily bread needed for himself, but still more for his family. Unhappy Divine Genius! He was an emperor's chapel-master, and yet his widow lacked the means to purchase a last resting-place for him. His body disappeared in the common sepulchre of the poor, and not a trace remained of one who had been so great a man—no sign was left to tell the passer-by, 'Here rests Mozart.'

But let us, as Mozart himself might have done, resume a happier tone; fain would we turn from the contemplation of such a woe, nor see that misery and death combined to cut down this flower!

Moreover, much of his music was composed by Mozart for the harpsichord, an instrument of which, as we are aware, the wires were played upon by goose-quills, gilded, and with such ar-

rangement we can understand that any attempt at grandeur was out of the question, while a passage descriptive of a burst of passion would have annihilated the fragile mechanism which produced the sound. This also explains the great amount of ornamentation of which Mozart makes use. No doubt his genius led him in this direction ; but also, as such feeble tones could not be sustained, he obeyed an imperious necessity, by prolonging the note of the melody by means of an ornamentation. The proof of this is evident in our finding these ornaments are infinitely more frequent in the music of his which we play upon the piano than in his operatic works or in his symphonies.

Mozart was, of course, purely classical in style, and his science even assisted the rapidity of his composition.

Every single work of his images himself completely ; and there we recognise him at once, with his own grace, his own charm, his sweet and transient tenderness, his high-bred vivacity, his easy courtesy, his fine temper. You will see him there open his heart to you, but quickly close it again, blushing. We picture Mozart in our fancy as surrounded with the gentlemen, and the great ladies, and amidst the splendid elegancies of the courts of Austria and France. There was *his* world. His genius, and the special nature of his

genius, gave him everywhere the right of citizenship. He took his place in this high society, which was perhaps somewhat over polished; but he had above all a sweet naïveté, which helps us to understand and to love his childish words to Marie-Antoinette.

The daughter of the emperor had taken him upon her knee and was giving him bon-bons. Mozart leant towards her, and smiling, said softly, 'Will you be my wife?'

He knew nothing as yet of social distinctions, and, all grace and beauty himself, he turned instinctively to one who was indeed grace and beauty personified.

As I have already said, Mozart is complete in each work of his; and if I were consulted as to which I should select, I should reply, 'Study *all* Mozart ever wrote, for every page neglected is a pearl rejected!'

The composers of the eighteenth century have a freshness, an exquisite delicacy of inspiration, which gives to all—even to the most severe, the most learned among them—a special characteristic, a supreme charm.

I have likened the music of such composers as Hadyn and Mozart to 'the age of maidenhood.' I repeat the thought, and hope my readers will feel that I am justified in it.

CHAPTER V.

BEETHOVEN—1790 TO 1827.

BEETHOVEN was, as we all know, born at Bonn, in 1770, and he died at Vienna, in 1827; fifty-seven years, of which at least thirty, proved to be for him one long torture. Misunderstood, baffled, bantered by his contemporaries, and only reaping a tardy glory that came towards the latter years of his life; poor, even to severest deprivation, because his nature, once free, proud, and independent, subsequently somewhat strange and shy, would not let him bend to the *quasi* servitude of being chapel-master to some great personage; suffering early, that is, at the age of twenty or twenty-two, from the first attacks of deafness, that he considered a disgrace for a musician, his sensitiveness increased by it to an extreme degree, and distrust and suspicion aroused; obliged to be ever on his guard against the piracies of publishers, who, by any and every means, would get possession of fragments of his

works, and produce them in false and disfigured guise, to escape the paying him a few paltry florins ; failing ever to find a faithful heart that would sympathise with his own ; then, endeavouring to secure some family affection by adopting his brother's son, having to carry on a long lawsuit with the mother of the child, who wished to take him back ; and then, when this was over and settled, having to experience the deepest disappointment in the subsequent misconduct and ingratitude of the young man himself ;—such was the prolonged agony suffered by this wondrous genius, and related to us in his glorious compositions.

Let us follow him for a few moments, see him in his tavern, when the food he orders is refused him, because he cannot pay for it. Or again, when his lawyer has told him he will take no further measures to secure the child to him, if he cannot pay him the money. He has not a farthing left in his miserable room ! He considers for a moment ; then, with bent head, pursues his way through the streets, without raising his eyes, heedless of the cries of the drivers calling after him, and unaware of danger—he arrives at the door of one of his publishers, Artaria. There he pauses, he cannot make up his mind to cross the threshold, and to have to give utterance to his griefs ! After a while he is observed, the publisher

comes out, 'Well, Beethoven, what is the matter now?' No reply but a sort of growl. 'Ah, yes! it is always the same thing, you want money! Well, then, I will advance you some more;' and he fetches a few poor florins (very few), and puts them into his hand, with the air with which one would give to any beggar.

It is a scene to make one shudder, and to call up the tears to one's eyes!

Hector Berlioz has said that the chief legacy left us by Beethoven, lies in his sonatas for the piano —and this is perfectly true.

Symphony was, beyond doubt, carried by him to the highest perfection which it has ever attained. But he made of it a wonder of 'descriptive poetry.'

Whether he recalls to us all the delights of nature, as he does in the 'Pastoral Symphony,' or chants forth the Epopea as in the 'Sinfonia Eroïca,' whether he makes us hear 'fate knocking at the door' (as he has said himself), in the symphony of C minor, it is always the great scenes of the world that he depicts or conjures up before our minds. In his quatuors, his trios, his sonatas, for piano and violin or violoncello, the subjects are more familiar, and again the necessity of making each instrument converse by turns, drags him somewhat out of himself.

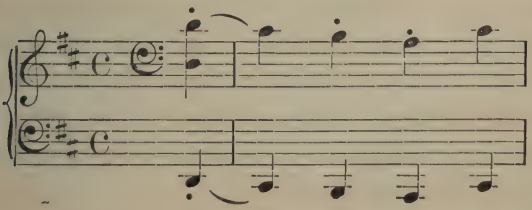
The piano, however, was ever his 'confidante,' it was the friend of his heart,—yet more, it was *his voice*, when he could not utter a syllable. An anecdote which I had personally from Camille Pleyel will explain what I wish to express.

Ignatius Pleyel and his son Camille, on their way to Vienna, one day called upon Beethoven. They found him in his gloomy chamber, sad and suffering. Whilst they all three talked together the evening came on, and Ignatius made some ineffectual attempts to enliven the flagging conversation. Presently it ended in complete silence. Beethoven, whose head was bent downwards, suddenly let his hands touch the piano. By degrees he began gently to improvise. The subject enlarged, developing more and more, till it grew on to sublime proportions, lifting the minds of the listeners beyond the earth as they sat dumb with wonder and in an ecstasy. This continued more than an hour, then the music ceased. The three friends parted without exchanging a word. They had communed in spirit one with the other. Camille Pleyel assured me that the recollection of this hour always made him shiver, and that he hardly knew whether, during it, he had not, like St Paul, been 'caught up into the third heaven.' One thing was very certain, that, having in boyish fashion seated himself on the arm of the wooden arm-chair in

which Beethoven sat, it was not till he had left the house that he became aware that the wooden bar had so hurt his limbs that he could not walk a step further for the pain, and even could hardly stand.

We see, then, that when Beethoven could no longer express himself in words, he made the piano speak for him. Hence comes the marvellous variety that is found in his sonatas. There are in them passages, expressive not only of every feeling, but of every shade of feeling, of which the human soul is capable. All are here, but the one predominating over all is sorrow,—sorrow, the lot of earth and of the 'valley of tears,' as it is truly styled in Holy Writ.

From his great intimacy with the piano, it happened also that his duos, trios, quatuors and symphonies were written, in the classical form, much later in his life than his sonatas for the piano solo. As early as the sonata in D major, Op. 10, No. 3, the extemporising style is inaugurated for the sonatas that follow. The law of unity of key is



in general strictly observed by Beethoven—it is consistent with his sense of the unity of the poem.

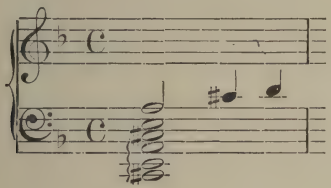
For example, in this sonata the key passes only from D major in the first movement to D minor in the largo, to return to D major in the minuet and the finale. Having set forth his two subjects at the beginning of the first part of the first movement, he seems to forget altogether the external world, and in entering on the second part he allows his fingers to wander over the keys, whilst his mind, all absorbed, seeks by what modulation, or rather by what road he should pursue his way. From a poetical point of view, one might say that in this work, the first movement represents the history of every human being, but told without individual emphasis.

The following movement, largo, is one of the most beautiful Beethoven ever wrote; it is a funereal meditation. Here we see painted the gloomy pomp of the last journey; we hear the mournful expressions of each person in the crowd; then the voice of the priest, solemn but full of strength and consolation. We follow the funeral car and listen to the sobs of those who have loved the departed one; then, when all is over, when the noises cease, one may still 'hear the deep silence' of man's last resting-place.

The minuet which follows seems like a return to the world of life, half sad, half gay.

Finally, in the last movement, Beethoven seems to have thought within himself, 'What *can* one do!' and then to have allowed his fancy to wander at will round and round this question, for which there is no reply.

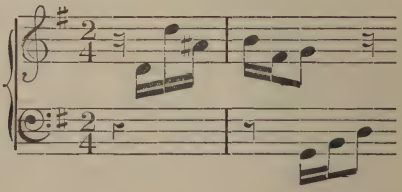
Another of his sonatas, which is even more expressive than the last, is Op. 31, No. 2, in D minor.



It reminds us of the visit of the Pleyels. It opens with a slow *arpeggio.* Then the improvisation begins, enlarges, goes on with some sad notes—stops—begins again. A recitative so expressive that one may almost say it speaks, confides to us the torture of his grief. Genius misunderstood, love rejected or deceived, friendships lost, sickness, wrestlings with woes, strivings without intermission with all the train of earthly ills, these are what bow down his head. Now comes the Adagio. It is like an endeavour to be resigned, an aspiration after rest, a pious acceptance of the fate: the

key of B flat lends its character of calm; but no! it is not possible, and the finale in D minor, like the first improvisation, brings back to us in a phrase, incessantly broken like a sob, all the bitterness, all the agitation, all the tumult of a breaking heart.

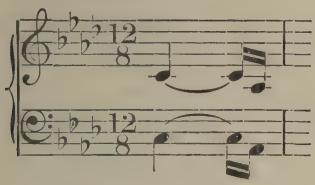
But he gives such a grandeur to his images, he so elevates the mind, that it is no longer the beating of the one man's heart that we hear. It is the heart of the world which throbs to our ear; or rather, it is as if this voice of pain from the high genius were an echo of the greater voice from Calvary, when humanity, personified in the Saviour, and bowed down by the burden of men's woes, uttered its loud cry of anguish to the Father in heaven.



By the side of these works, so painful in expression, let us place the sonata Op. 14, No. 2, in G major. How youthful, how free, how joyous is this! It is as if, on a lovely morning in spring, casting behind him the perplexities of life, he sets

forth along the moors, just to breathe the fresh air, humming as he goes a careless melody (motif), and finding on his sunny path only butterflies and flowers.

Let us turn now to the sonata by Beethoven, 57th Op., in F minor, also known as the Sonata



Appassionata; I know not why. We have an accurate idea of the poem which Beethoven was inspired to write in this work of extraordinary grandeur, for he has told us about it himself. 'Read Shakespere's "Tempest,"' was his reply to one who had asked him what he had intended to portray in these marvellous pages.

It is therefore a meditation at sea, ending in a catastrophe. And, truly, all the first part bears the stamp of thoughts, grave and sombre, and stirring also, which arise in the presence of immensity.

The Andante seems to me to represent a religious

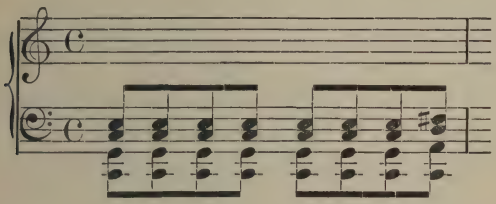
scene in the tropics ; I can see the scintillating rays of the sun. I feel the heavy weight of the day while the priests chant their hymn. Then a diminished seventh forms the unique mode of transition from the andante to the finale. This is the first flash of lightning from the black cloud which will soon envelop all ; and then comes a terrible confusion ; everything is shattered by the wildly conflicting waves, which rise mountains high. Mothers weep, the sailors crowd the deck, till a last mighty billow comes to engulf them all.

Beethoven composed this finale during a walk which he took in the neighbourhood of Vienna with his pupil Ries. All the time they were walking he was crying out, roaring and raving as one out of his senses ; then rushing home in furious haste he flung himself down to his writing-table. He did not lift his head until the finale was finished and written down without a single correction ; I have seen it. The MS. of this sonata is in the possession of a friend of ours, M. René Baillot, son of the great violinist of that name.

Then, in a pastoral style, what a marvellous sonata, again, is his Op. 53, in C major, dedicated to Count Wladestein, and known also by the name of ' Aurora ! '

How beautifully the first part renders, in the most poetic manner possible, that sort of mys-

terious murmur of nature which precedes the dawn, interrupted by a hymn of thanksgiving! Example—

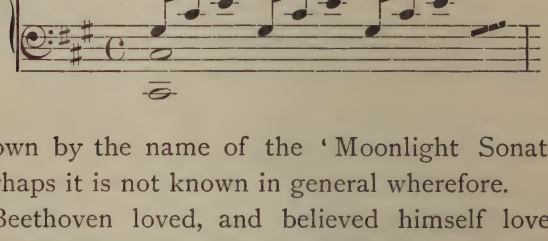


All living things awake, and by degrees their voices mingle with the general murmur, and await the king of day, who, announced by a final burst of sound, is at length seen on the horizon.

The andante, or rather the intermezzo which follows, represents to me the calm of the landscape, overflowed, as it is, by the gilding rays of the universal sunshine. I can even see one solitary workman, who comes out of his cottage and stands there contemplating the morning. Then, quite in the distance, a rural pipe is heard to sound. It is to be a *gala* day. There is going to be a dance, and the neighbouring villagers will come to join ours for the *fête*. The pipes reply to one another, then girls and boys dance and jump about with all their might. The old men sing a refrain as they order out their cups of wine. It is to my mind an actual picture of Teniers—a Kermess.

There is not even wanting to the picture the passing of sweet words of love under the great trees, where the breeze is playing; whilst some of the droning notes of the bagpipes are still making themselves heard.

We might in this manner analyse the thirty-two sonatas for the piano solo; but we must keep within bounds, and I will only add a few words commenting on the Op. 27 in C sharp minor,



known by the name of the 'Moonlight Sonata.' Perhaps it is not known in general wherefore.

Beethoven loved, and believed himself loved. The Countess Guicciardi, then quite young, seemed, as he imagined, to be not insensible to his affection, and the great dreamer thought at length he was understood; when, in the course of a journey, she married.

Some time after she returned to Vienna, and invited Beethoven to one of her 'réunions.' He came . . . but oppressed by an unspeakable sorrow, he went down into the garden, and upon a

stone table there, and by the moonlight, he wrote down the 'Adagio Sostenuto,' which begins this work, and which breathes throughout so exactly the dejected calm of a complete despair. The 'Presto Agitato,' which follows a short 'minuet,' where he seems to have attempted a kind of self-consolation,—the presto, I say, is impetuous, full of tumult, wild as a passionate cry. He was here constrained to the utterance of his grief, and he has uttered it in such a way as must move every suffering spirit for years, and indeed for centuries to come.

Towards the close of his life, about the ten last years, the genius of Beethoven assumed a mystical colouring. His phrases lengthened, his meditations on 'the silence of the tomb, became more persistent, and his imagination leads us to metaphysical heights, which I am sure the majority of persons could with difficulty attain to—because to follow him thither requires not only profound musical feeling, but, besides, a certain capacity of the mind, which, I believe, belongs only to the few. However, in his full maturity, and during those years of the desperate conflict which he had to fight out with the griefs of life, Beethoven's spirit is accessible to all. It is like the great sounding-board of humanity. His music is one continual improvisation, apparently ignoring all restricting rules of

erudition, and yet, unconsciously, obeying ever the great fundamental laws of unity—laws which are of highest importance to the order and perfection of every musical work.

It seems to me that his latter manner attained the limit permitted to human power, and that his length of phrase cannot be exceeded without becoming unintelligible; in the same way that the notes of the piano cannot be added to beyond a certain limit, as the ear would there lose the vibrations, the sound would be as a noise only, and the note would be inaudible.

We must, however, acknowledge that it was this last period of Beethoven's writings that opened the door for the modern tendencies, and made men think that, as in his upward march, the genius of Beethoven had conquered these heights—and as these heights explored by him had become accessible to those who, confiding in the genius of the guide, studied how to gain them without fear of failure; since, in short, by dint of time and study, the path was made practicable to many now, at least to their comprehension—there seemed no reason why it should not be possible to try to mount even higher. It is specious enough, and it is in a degree embarrassing to endeavour to set a boundary to human intellect, especially after glancing at the history of the successful conflict

that every man of genius has had to sustain with his contemporaries. However, it is certain that if, on representing to me with what difficulty the tops of the high mountains had been climbed, it was proposed that, having attained these, the next aim should be to aspire to the moon, I should hardly be able to prevent a smile!

Our physical domain is limited, and we cannot go beyond it.

May it not be the same among those things which concern the intelligence?

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONTEMPORARIES OF BEETHOVEN— 1730 TO 1830.

WE have now to take into consideration the contemporaries of Beethoven, the composers of the period when music had attained to its fullest power of expression.

John Nepomuc Hummel, composer, improviser, and pianist, was born, 14th November 1778, at Presburg, where his father, Joseph Hummel, was music master at the military institution of Wartberg. At four years old a violin was placed in the little hands of the child, but he had no taste for the instrument; at five he was set to the piano, at which he made rapid progress, and at seven, his father having lost his employment, he was brought to Vienna, where the child's great ability attracted the attention of Mozart himself. In spite of the repugnance Mozart had for teaching, he undertook the musical education of the little virtuoso, on con-

dition that he should live with him, and thus his studies could always be looked after by himself.

We can imagine with what joy such a proposal was accepted. Hummel thus became the pupil of Mozart. His progress was, as might be expected from such a pupil and such a master, marvellous. At nine years old he made his first appearance in public, at a concert given by Mozart at Dresden, 1787. The admiration excited by so precocious a talent determined his father to take advantage of it, and make him travel through Germany, Denmark, Scotland, England, and Holland. This journey lasted six years. He returned to Vienna, and though at this time, he being fifteen years old, his execution was considered as the most perfect and most brilliant of the German school, his studies were made far more severe than hitherto. His father, an extremely harsh man, and accustomed to military discipline, exacted from him ceaseless work, and long after, when Hummel was a man, and everywhere celebrated as an artist, he still bent, without a murmur, to this imperious will.

The date of his return to Vienna is marked by studies in composition, of which he had but slight notion till then, although his first work, a 'Theme and Variations' for the piano, composed at Edinburgh in his tenth year (1788), and dedicated to the Queen of England, went through two

editions that same year. He now studied under Albrechtsberger, who also gave some lessons in harmony to Beethoven. Then he formed a friendship for Salieri, who gave him excellent advice for songs and for the dramatic style. In 1803 he entered the service of Prince Nicolas Esterhazy, and his first mass won the approbation of the great Haydn. Hummel was twenty-eight years old, was already famous in Germany and England, while his name was entirely unknown in France. But in 1806 Cherubini brought thither from Vienna Hummel's great Fantasia, Op. 18, which was performed the same year at the competition at the Conservatoire at Paris. From that moment his works were in demand by all pianists.

In 1811 he left the service of Prince Esterhazy, and remained at Vienna, simply as composer, till 1816, then accepted the post of chapel-master to the King of Wurtemburg. Four years after he removed to the same post with the Duke of Saxe Weimar: in two years taking his leave, he travelled on foot in Russia, where he had the most brilliant reception; visited Holland and Belgium in 1823, and reached Paris, where he was received with enthusiasm.

He returned to Weimar, and only left it in 1827, when he heard of the approaching end of Beethoven. Some rivalry between these two, on account

of his successes, had given rise to sad altercations ; but, on discerning the signs of approaching dissolution on the countenance of the great man, he burst into tears. Beethoven held out his hand to him, and they embraced, and all the past pettinesses of this life vanished from their hearts, with this supreme kiss of peace.

It was two years later that Hummel paid a second visit to Paris, when a slight falling off in his playing was observable; and in London he had the mortification to find that the glory of his past fame was over, and followed in the public feeling by indifference. Returning to Weimar, he there passed a few tranquil years, till his death on the 17th October 1837.

No doubt, had Hummel not been the contemporary of Beethoven, his name as a composer would have stood higher. Properly speaking, his is a mixed style, partly similar to that of Mozart, and partly to that of Beethoven, and participating in the two different streams of which I have spoken. It is not a sudden alteration, but a transition. But from this observation, it is evident where we must place him. As a power in music, with a plenitude of means and richness of combination, he is certainly a great composer. His relative inferiority is caused by Beethoven's immense poetic power. Hummel never rises to the point of making the

piano speak. His is true music; he produces an impression upon you, but this impression is always constrained. Convinced as I am that the individual life is reflected in the work, I believe that the great pressure exercised by his father upon Hummel weighed down the intellect, which must have been of a peculiar nature, to have submitted at all to such a tyranny.

Thus, in the Fantasia, Op. 18, which I take as a type, I scarcely can consider it a true poem. Yet there is well-defined improvisation; the arpeggios and the recitative of the first movement are calm and solemn, as if awaiting inspiration. The idea of the second movement, allegro con fuoco, is dramatic; the third, largo a cantabile, is of exquisite grace; and the finale in G minor has a certain degree of passionate agitation; but all this stops short of perfection, and if one experiences much pleasure in listening to these charming works, one is not touched by them; one never forgets the piano, the performer, nor the composer. There lies the inferiority of Hummel as compared with his colossal contemporary; but it is radical, and it has been felt more strongly than was perhaps quite right or just to him.

As a composer for the piano, Hummel is one whom it is of the greatest importance to study. No other *places* the hand so well; no other gives such a

degree of elegance and facility for playing, enabling the performer, by the natural and normal position for the muscles, to obtain a quality of tone, so large, so equable, or also so attractive by its softness.

A composer of high merit, almost forgotten in these days, is Ferdinand Ries. I would gladly recall a memory of him, for his name is so much the more interesting to us, being, as it is, almost bound up with that of Beethoven, his master and his friend.

He was born at Bonn, in 1784; his father was director of music in the service of the Elector of Cologne. Ruined by the war, and without the means to help his son in his career, he sent him to Beethoven, who had been his friend. The young Ries had but seven ducats, as his whole fortune, when he started for Vienna. But he was going to one of noble heart. Poor as he himself was, Beethoven cordially welcomed him, and kept Ries to make his house his home for four years.

I am much surprised that the remembrance of Ries should be so completely lost in London, for he had great success there. He lived in London eleven years, from March 1813 to May 1824; he married an English lady, made a large fortune, and left London for Frankfort, where he died, 13th January 1838, at the age of fifty-two.

It is generally considered that his style emanates

from Beethoven. I do not find that it is so in his works for the piano. It is full of grace, it is correctly written, but I do not discern in it the fire of inspiration, or even a reflection of true genius. It is a *charming* style; but who would use the word 'charming' in reference to the works, to even the daintiest passages, of Beethoven? It would seem as unsuitable an epithet as to call the Moses of Michael Angelo *graceful!*

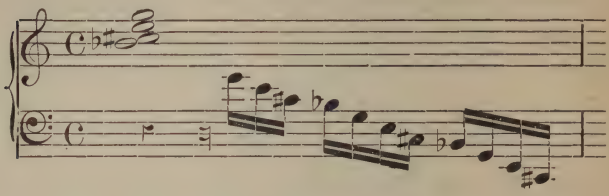
Ries had a comparatively easy career, a tranquil nature without great aspirations, and, like Hummel, whom he much resembled both in his life and his temperament, he composed music for the piano, intended to exhibit the brilliant powers both of the instrument and of the pianist also. Their music is correct; it is agreeable to the ear and a repose for the mind. As for the vital question, of its utterance of the sorrows of the heart, there is nothing of the sort attempted. Both Hummel and Ries are, however, musicians, alike by their knowledge of rules and by inspiration. But their Muse seeks not lofty heights, and she finds herself more suitably placed in some snug corner, far from the disturbing tempest. These are the joyous ones of the art, only poorly gifted by the musical spirit; the shorn lambs for whom the searching wind is tempered. They are, however, among the elect, and, as such, command our consideration.

Carl Maria von Weber—he is a genius indeed! and one of extraordinary power. He was born at Eutin, in Holstein, in 1786, and died in London in 1826. He was the son of an eminent musician; his masters were Henschkel and *Michael* Haydn. At the age of fourteen he composed an opera, 'The Wood-Maiden,' and early became the rival of the first artists at Vienna.

He was appointed chapel-master at Breslau; attached himself, in 1806, to Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg; was entrusted with the reorganisation of the opera at Prague in 1813; then on the invitation of the King of Saxony, he busied himself in the construction of a German opera at Dresden, from 1816 to 1820; visited successfully Berlin in 1822, Paris in 1826, and London, where he died. His *chefs-d'œuvre* are the three operas, 'Freischutz,' 'Euryanthe,' and 'Oberon' or the 'Fairy King.'

The genius of Weber is essentially dramatic, and his works for the piano bear the traces of this tendency, and one often hears in them distinctly the voices and the orchestra. Above all, he loved and understood the weird and the fantastic, and, as you may perceive from his operas, the Satanic world he preferred above all. His 'Freischutz' is, in my own opinion, the work in which he reveals himself most completely, and I always find a reflection of this poem in everything that I play by

this composer. For example, in the sonata Op. 39, in A flat major, and which I consider a sustained



duet with soli and orchestra, you will recognise in the first movement the colouring of the incantation scene in the second act of 'Freischutz.'

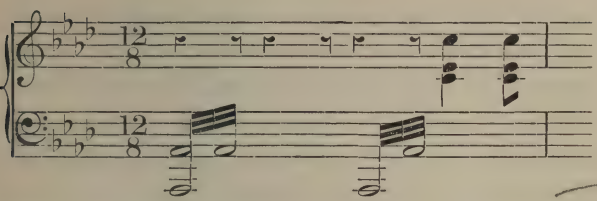
There is the great dark forest, with its muffled sounds, terrifying, as if the moans of condemned spirits are mingling with the blasts of the wind, and sending a thrill of horror to the hearts of the young couple who are passing beneath the shadow of the trees.

The andante appears to me to be a sort of funeral march, for the orchestra alone.

The scherzo reminds one of the Dance of Death. It makes one shudder.

The rondo, on the contrary, seems to me to be a tender duet, as if the young couple, of whom I spoke before, at length delivered from all alarming apparitions, discourse together on varied themes, interrupted by the ever-recurring expression of their love.

In the sonata Op. 49, in D minor, we find again a



characteristic waywardness expressed by his phrases —perverseness of humour and demoniac mockery side by side with dance phrases or melodious notes recalling the human voice. And it appears to me impossible not to recognise his orchestral combinations in the andante, which resembles a symphony, reduced for performing on a piano. I fancy myself at the opera, when I contemplate one of Weber's works ; closing my eyes, I can follow all the movements of the actors and describe even the entrance and exit of each person, as well as the part he plays.

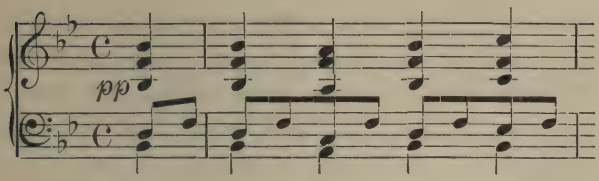
Besides these delightful compositions, Weber wrote many of excessive brilliancy for the piano. Such are his 'Concertstück,' with orchestral accompaniment ; his Variations on the air 'Vien qua Dorina bella,' and several others of wonderful richness, for the performer.

Schubert, who was born in Vienna in 1797, and died in 1828, was thirty years of age at the death of Beethoven in 1827 ; he had thus grown up, studied,

and he died only one year after the great master, and therefore just at the moment when the fame of Beethoven blazed forth and, as with the rays of a sun, penetrated and fertilised the soil of all the fields of musical art. There is, therefore, nothing surprising in the fact that Schubert became impregnated with the powerful influence of the mighty genius who then was beginning to be appreciated—and impregnated to such an extent, that all, not only his admirers but those, too, who were indifferent to him, vied with one another in repeating, 'He composes in the manner of Beethoven.' Yes, it is true Schubert is a reflection—a brilliant one if you will, but still *only a reflection*—of the great master. Original genius, so far as we mean by the term, the power of creating a style, is not found in his larger works. And yet he has left us in his 'songs' a vast number of masterpieces, each complete in itself, and greater in their small frames, than many works that are of considerable length.

In his instrumental works the colouring is not so rich, the form not so perfect, the inspiration is less direct from the fountain; one is inclined to find him often extremely lengthy—and yet! of how high an order are all his compositions!

From amongst his very numerous pages written for the piano, I would take as a type the sonata Op. 65, in B flat, the most widely known and played.



Very classical in form, calm and melodious, it still seems open to one critical remark. The first and second subjects of the first movement are both of the nature of a song, which prevents variety. But when studying the work, I have thought I perceived that this was the special aim of the composer. This sonata gives me the impression of a *souvenir*. It seems to me as if Schubert were recalling some happy hour long since departed. He speaks in a hushed voice, if I may so express it. I see him as he lets his hands stray carelessly over the keys, while his fancy conjures up again those events through which he first came to know *her*—that fair one—that attractive star (first movement). Then that day when he followed *her* to the church (andante). Then, on another day, to the ball (scherzo). Then her grace, her waywardness (finale).

If I had to give to this sonata a name, it would certainly be 'La Rimembranza.'

Schubert led a retired and unostentatious life, and died before he had been appreciated. Of a gentle and dreamy disposition, and more than this,

even melancholy, can we not trace in his art that he was ever dwelling in thought on some rare moments past and gone, when he thought himself understood, cared for, even loved, and had been happy!

George Onslow was son of an English gentleman and of a French lady (*née* Mademoiselle de Bourdeilles), a descendant of Brantôme, and was born at Clermont-Ferrant in 1784.

In the case of Onslow the musical vocation was late in declaring itself, and he himself tells us, that until the age of nearly sixteen, he experienced only the most entire indifference when listening to the works of the great composers. That which these master-pieces could not effect was brought about by an overture to an opera by Mèhul. 'On hearing this piece,' he writes, 'I experienced so profound an emotion in the depths of my being, that I was conscious of being penetrated by feelings I had never before known. Even to this day that moment is vivid to my mind. From that time I looked upon music with entirely different eyes. The veil which had hidden its beauties from me was torn away; it became the source of my intensest enjoyments and the companion of my life.'

Unfortunately for the development of his talent, Onslow had, perhaps, too calm and too peaceful a

life. Living the greater part of the year in the country, possessing a splendid fortune, being a happy husband and a happy father, and only quitting his native place to spend a few winter months in Paris, no events occurred to awaken a stronger vibration in his life, and he continued to be the echo of Mèhul, and his music that of a very estimable talent, without expansion. The position he holds, however, is such that he cannot be omitted, even in a sketch, rapid as this is, of the composers contemporary with the first years of the nineteenth century.

Another composer for the piano, who had an immense reputation, was Daniel Steibelt, son of a pianoforte-maker, born in Berlin in 1765. His natural inclination for music was so evident in his earliest years, that it excited the interest of the Prince Royal, afterwards King of Prussia (Frederic William II.), who gave him Kirnberger to teach him the clavecin and composition.

But Steibelt could not endure the discipline of a master's teaching, and would have no other guide but his own instinct. Thus it is that the absence of proper study is felt in all his works; but his genius was, on some occasions, powerful enough to make us forget this want. In Germany, however, he had but indifferent success. He went

to Paris in 1790, and there found an influential protector in Viscount de Ségur, who introduced him into the highest circles. He became the fashion; was the teacher of Mademoiselle de Beauharnais (afterwards Queen Hortense), and of all the ladies of rank at the time of the Directoire. Unfortunately, his peevish disposition, his want of education, and faults of a more serious kind, obliged him to quit Paris. He went through Holland and thence to London, where he married. But English society was too critical for him; and being neither appreciated nor even received, he left the country and travelled in the northern parts of Europe, giving concerts; and then to St Petersburg, where he made himself a position, and where he died, 20th September 1823. His death plunged his family into great distress, but Count Milarodowitch, who had admired the genius of Steibelt, took his widow and children under his protection, and gave in their behalf a concert, which brought in forty thousand roubles (about one hundred and twenty thousand francs, or £4800).

'L'Orage,' the *Andante* of one of his concerts, was a Pastoral by him, which made so considerable a sensation that, during twenty years, it was played *throughout Europe* by every possible pianist. Steibelt created the 'Genre Variations,' which, alas! has since been terribly abused.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PIANISTS—1810 TO 1850.

THE great political convulsions of the peoples having been allayed, and the art of music having, with continuous progress, attained to its highest limit, its course was now stayed. There was a pause in the propelling flow of inspiration, and this pause had its favourable result in the appearance of the Pianist.

I mean by Pianist, the artist who is solely occupied with the mechanical part of music, considering it his chief glory to excel in the gymnastics of the fingers. We have hitherto spoken of those who, masters in the art, wrote down their thoughts, almost to the neglect of the execution. Thus it often happened that, in the matter of performance, they were betrayed, and that the finest works suffered from insufficiency of means.

Now came a whole generation that busied itself exclusively with the means, and in its turn somewhat neglected the thought, the poetry—in a word,

the art itself! But let us not regret this: in increasing the strength of the means, in seeking perfection in the mechanical part, in pushing muscular dexterity even to acrobatism, these pianists brought about an advance in the manner of interpretation. For they not only obliged the fingers to acquire a dazzling swiftness, but forced the makers of instruments to effect constant improvements; so that we now have fingers as well as instruments worthy of rendering great works in all their imposing beauty, and capable of 'doing them justice,' to use an English term, which seems to me the most happy expression one can find.

We will now say a few words about him, who, by his scholastic works, has done the most for the advancement of the mechanical part of music, Charles Czerny.

Czerny was born at Vienna, 21st February 1791. His father, Wenislaus Czerny, was born in Bohemia, and had been settled at Vienna as professor of the piano since 1789. Too poor to be able to give his son an instructor of repute, he himself set the boy to work at the compositions of Sebastian Bach, of Mozart, Clementi, and Beethoven, who soon became the special object of the young artist's devotion. He learnt writing in the didactic style of

Kirnberger, Albrechtsberger, and other theoreticians. Being intended from his childhood to teach the piano, he began to give lessons at the age of fourteen, and continued this career ever after. He was so much the vogue at Vienna, that he gave up twelve hours a day to playing and teaching. In this way he was unable to develop his own powers of execution, which would otherwise have been very remarkable. But the number of his written works is truly incredible. He did not publish his earliest compositions, and it was not till 1820, when he was aged twenty-nine, that his works appeared. But from that time until 1856 he published the almost fabulous number of 850 productions, great and small, for the piano, whilst this figure does not include the arrangement of a vast quantity of symphonies, oratorios, opera overtures, and his German translation of the voluminous work of Reicha upon harmony nor his great 'Methode de Piano,' nor his treatise on composition, nor twenty-four masses with orchestra, nor four requiems, three hundred graduals, motets, concertos symphonies, quatuors, quintetts, in all more than four hundred works, which remain in manuscript.

It is evident that, for such labour as this, he must quite have given up living to the world, although he was a pleasing and amiable person. He was a small man, of delicate constitution, and

perfectly simple manners. He died at Vienna, aged sixty-six, 19th July 1857.

We begin our review of the Pianists with Theodore Döhler. He was born, April 20, 1814, at Naples, where his father was bandmaster in a regiment. Döhler was seven years old when he began the piano, but his talent was such that in six months he surpassed his elder sister in his performance, though she had played for several years. When Benedict was residing at Naples, Döhler became his pupil—then he followed his family, first to Lacques, where his father was engaged in the service of the Prince, and then to Vienna, where he became the pupil of Czerny. He had performed in public since he was thirteen years old, and although at seventeen he became virtuoso and private musician to the Prince de Lacques, and had the honour of accompanying him in travelling, yet he obtained leave of absence which enabled him to perform in all parts of Europe, and to give a vast number of concerts, first at Berlin and Leipsic, then in Italy, in France, in England, in Holland, all over Germany, in Sweden, and I know not where else, and at length in Russia, where he remained nearly two years. These travels had lasted from 1836 to 1843. At St Petersburg he had found a powerful protectress in Princess Tschermetoff. Döhler was a person of handsome appearance and of charming manners. Thus it was that the interest en-

tertained for the pianist by the Princess, changed to a more tender sentiment, and although her rank placed great difficulties in the way, in Russia, yet by perseverance and making some sacrifices, she succeeded in surmounting them, and Döhler became her husband in 1846. They settled in Italy, and the artist was transformed into the amateur. Unfortunately, at the moment when all seemed to promise for him the most delightful existence, his health broke down, and in spite of the most tender care, he languished and died at Rome, February 21, 1856, at the early age of forty-two. Döhler's execution was delightful; and relatively the same charm is noticeable in his works also. He wrote many arrangements of airs from Italian operas. But his 'Nocturnes' are his original works, and I prefer them to the former, as they better reveal to us his individual talent, of a graceful dreaminess.

We now come to the 'king of variation,' Henry Herz. Born at Vienna, 6th January 1803, he began his studies at Coblenz, under the direction of his father, and by the aid of some elementary books. At eight years old he performed at a public concert the 'Variations' by Hummel, Op. 8. But the weakness of his left hand in comparison with the right, appeared to offer an invincible obstacle to the development of his art, when his father thought of correcting this defect by the study of

the violin, and this expedient was thoroughly successful. He had scarcely received three months' instruction in composition from the organist Hunten, when Herz wrote a *sonatine* for the piano. His father, foreseeing the musical future that awaited him, wished to place him in the most favourable conditions for the development of his powers. He took him to Paris, and obtained his admission to the Conservatoire, 19th April 1816. Pradher was his master, became attached to him, and immediately looked upon Herz as the hope of the approaching competition on pianos; when, at the last moment, his studies were interrupted by an attack of small-pox. However, four days before the contest took place, the invalid left his bed, and, trembling with weakness, set himself down to his piano. Four days afterwards he had carried off the first prize. From this moment his talent soared aloft, his reputation was made, his name became popular. Herz was the pupil of Dourlen for harmony, and of Reicha for composition; he wrote his first works, L'air Tyroliez with variations, and the Rondo alla Cosaca, when he was hardly sixteen years old, and his productions were most favourably received.

The arrival of Moscheles at Paris, and the concerts he gave there, greatly influenced the style of Henri Herz—his playing gained in elegance, light-

ness and brilliancy. It is remarkable that while Herz now appropriated a little of the manner of Moscheles, this last altered his somewhat, for it was after his performing at Paris that his playing took a larger character, and a more elevated style.

In 1831 Herz and the celebrated violinist Lafont made their first brilliant journey through Germany. In 1834, Herz visited England, Scotland, and Ireland, and was everywhere enthusiastically received. In 1838 and 1839, Herz and Lafont travelled together in Holland and Southern France, but their course of successes was interrupted by the death of Lafont, who was killed by an accident to a diligence.

About this time Henri Herz became concerned in the manufacture of pianos, at first with Klepter, and afterwards alone. But, occupied as he was with composition, teaching and performing, he neglected his own interests, and suffered considerable losses.

He then determined, in order to keep up his manufactory, to pay a visit to America, where he was already greatly celebrated by his compositions, and he set out in 1845. Three times he traversed the United States (giving over 400 concerts), from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charlestown, and New Orleans, to Jamaica. Then he passed to Havanah and Vera Cruz, then to Mexico, always giving a number of concerts. At the request of General Herrara, then President of the Mexican

Republic, he composed a Hymn to a poem which had been put up for competition, and which has since become the national hymn of that country.

He travelled through Mexico, crossed the Cordilleras on the back of a mule, visited Chili and Peru, traversing the countries from end to end, and then went to California, where, in spite of the yellow fever, his concerts were well attended.

The story of the first of these, an evening concert, is typical enough. All was ready, the audience assembled in the hall, and Herz appeared to begin his performance, when the discovery was made that one thing was wanting—the piano! nobody had thought of that! and there was not a single piano in the whole of the town—the new city of Sacramento. What was to be done? 'Sing a French romance,' cried several voices, and Herz began to sing without accompaniment. While this was going on, some of the audience had hurried away, determined to go off some few miles distant, and fetch an old dismantled harpsichord, which they presently brought in, carrying it on their shoulders. One octave only was at all in order, and it was on this octave that Herz made his performance. One can imagine what fine kind of music that must have been! But everyone, even the pianist as well, had lighted their cigars, and the evening passed to the satisfaction of all, and ended with

a request for a second concert, for which they sent to San Francisco for a piano. Herz then returned to Valparaiso, to Lima, always giving a series of concerts wherever he went, and at length came back to Paris, after an absence of five years, that had borne abundant fruit.

At this time, 1851, Henri Herz gave himself up to the development of his manufacture of pianos, and raised it to the highest standard. Satisfied and happy on this subject, he still did not neglect the source of his former successes, and again started on his travels, making numerous and always fruitful expeditions, first to Spain, then in Belgium, in Holland, the Rhine Provinces, Russia, Poland, etc., etc.

The quality of the music by Herz for the piano was so admirable, it excelled that of all other music of the same kind, during about fifteen years; and his success was so great, that editors paid three or four times as much for his manuscripts than they would for those of better composers for the piano. These works are more than 200 in number. His style is especially brilliant in execution—and Herz composed a vast quantity of variations on operatic airs. He did, however, write six concertos with the orchestra, which have a certain value and originality, but these are the least known of his works. Also fourteen rondos, one sonata, and a trio for the piano, violin and violoncello. All the

rest are more or less 'Variations' on subjects such as 'The Violet,' 'La Petit Tambour,' 'La Sonnambula,' etc., and he may be called the inventor of the 'genre' 'Reminiscences,' in which the several airs of one opera are successively bound together, for good or for ill, by transition passages of great brilliancy.

It is 'drawing-room music' in the true meaning of the word. It attracts attention to the performer, it amuses the company, and it does not prevent earnest minds, true musicians, learned or literary persons, from thinking—of something else! Henri Herz still continues head of a magnificent manufactory of pianos, has a charming and affectionate wife, and completes, in tranquil ease, a career which has proved one of the most enjoyable and most fortunate among musicians.

Ignace Moscheles deserves all our attention, as the creator of 'modification of tone' on the piano, but here is the virtuoso coupled with the great artist. He was born at Prague, the 30th May 1794, and was the son of a Jewish merchant. His first teachers were obscure musicians, but in 1804 he became the pupil of Denis Weber, Director of the Conservatoire of Prague, who made him study the works of Mozart, of Handel, and of Sebastian Bach. An indefatigable worker,

and gifted with a prodigious facility, Moscheles could soon have triumphed over any material difficulty, but his mind, accustomed to this strong nourishment, was impregnated by learned combinations of harmonies, and there is no doubt that the elevated style of his own works was the result of this earnest tone in his education.

Hardly twelve years old, he appeared in the public concerts at Prague, and obtained there great successes. This made his family decide to send him to Vienna, where he would not fail to find the best means of instruction and the finest models. Here he became the pupil of Albrechtsberger, in harmony and counterpoint, and was instructed in the æsthetics of the art by Salieri, who entertained for him a warm affection.

At sixteen, Moscheles began to attract the attention of artists by his performances at concerts. He formed a friendship with Meyerbeer, who was very remarkable at this time as a pianist, and the rivalry between the two young virtuosi was very useful to both in stimulating their energy without interfering with their mutual affection—a most rare case, one may remark in passing.

In 1816 he undertook his first journey, and astonished the musical world by the newness of his style of playing. It was, in fact, Moscheles who invented the art of changing the sound by

the touch, which was equivalent to enriching the execution by the whole scale of shades of tone, for before this, there was nothing more than *f* and *p* (*forte* and *piano*), which was the only variety of tone that the harpsichord would allow of, and that the organ of the first masters had bequeathed us.

Thus it was a true revolution which Moscheles effected in pianoforte playing, and a happy one, as it opened the mind and gave a new direction to the aims of the young pianists of the time.

In 1820 he travelled through the Rhine provinces, Holland, the Netherlands, and at length reached Paris, where he excited much enthusiasm. In 1821 he came to London, where his successes produced the same *éclat*. He settled there, and became one of the favourite masters in fashionable society. In 1823 he wished to see his family again, and crossed Germany, giving performances at Munich, Vienna, Dresden, Leipsig, Berlin, and Hamburg.

It was on setting out on this journey that his style took the elevated and serious character, which has made him 'par excellence' *the* classical composer for the piano.

Moscheles was one of the few virtuosi who have been great as musicians, and have shown a wide field of learning in his art. Nobody knew better than he did the old composers, and the special style of each one. He gave very interest-

ing *séances* in London, when he performed, by turns, pieces by Bach, Scarlatti, Handel, and by Beethoven, and at which he did not forget the young and bold innovators in the art of his own time. He astonished and delighted all, by his power of changing his style, in order to give the special character of each.

The art of improvising was one of the astonishing features of his intelligence. The great richness of ideas which he showed, and particularly the prodigious fecundity of his resources, originated a doubt of the spontaneity of his inspirations. But one fact alone will serve to prove how unjust were these doubts.

On one occasion, at a concert in Brussels, in 1839, he was given three *themas*, among which he was to select the one that might best suit him, to improvise upon. He took all the three, treated them successively, then reunited them in an exquisite manner, passing them from one hand to the other, making them mutually accompany one another, without the slightest hesitation, without permitting any diminution in the interest. It may be imagined what frantic applause followed the performance of this *tour de force*. I have this fact from a witness of the performance.

Moscheles lived for a long time in London. He was Professor of the Piano at the Royal

Academy of Music, and one of the directing members of the concerts of the Philharmonic Society.

In 1846, yielding to the entreaties of his friend Felix Mendelssohn, he accepted the position of Professor of the Piano at the Conservatoire of Leipsic; he settled in that city with his family, and died there 10th May 1870.

The music of Moscheles was of too serious a character to become popular, but it is, and ought to be considered by amateurs, a production of which the excellence of the composition is only equalled by the novelty of the ideas. However, while I greatly respect the admirable quality of his works, I cannot help feeling that this perfection too much resembles that of Hummel. To my mind, therefore, Moscheles is greater as a pianist than as a composer. Because, as a *pianist* he had truly invented new sounds—had dowered the art with a new power!

We will now speak of another inventor of effects on the piano,—of Sigismund Thalberg. He was born at Geneva, the 7th January 1812, and was descended from a high family. He was taken when very young to Vienna, where his musical education was begun. It has been said that he received lessons from Sechter and from Hummel,

but Thalberg himself declared, that he had never any other professor to instruct him but the first bassoon of the Imperial theatre. His lessons were easy to him, thanks to his natural talent, which was quite exceptional, and at the age of sixteen he began to perform in public, and to attract attention. The novelty which, introduced by Thalberg, has rendered his name justly celebrated, consisted in this.

The school of the early pianists was divided into two distinct categories—the brilliant pianists, such as Clementi and his pupils, and the harmonist pianists, as Mozart and Beethoven ; but in both these schools and their subdivisions it is observable that the melody and the harmony on the one side, and the brilliant ornaments on the other, were always carefully kept separate, and these two parts, which constituted piano music, appeared to be taken up only by turns, and so regularly as to be in nearly symmetrical order. Thalberg undertook to unite them, and the new forms which he imagined to give variety to the Arpeggio, as well as the happy method he had of utilising the pedals, and especially a very admirable fulness of tone (which was a faculty peculiar to himself), produced a very magical effect which astounded his hearers, not only the amateurs, but even the artists of his time.

Thalberg travelled over the whole civilised globe, and earned a world-wide renown. In these days the astonishment is passed by—and the monotony resulting from the repeated use of the same means, has led to his compositions being more and more neglected. In my opinion this is wrong, for it is good and useful to be acquainted with such effects as he produced, which add greatly to the means of execution. It is especially valuable to strive after that rich sonorous tone which was so remarkable in the touch of Thalberg. I was very young when I heard Thalberg play the 'Prayer of Moses,' arranged by himself, and I still recall the thrill which vibrated through me as I listened to the amazing strength, the richness and the pliancy also of those marvellous hands. It was one of those transports of enthusiasm which have remained, and will remain ineffaceably in my memory.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAST CLASSICS—1790 TO 1875.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN was born in Hamburg in 1809. Before he was three years old his family came to reside in Berlin. His father was a banker; with Felix, therefore, fortune sat beside his cradle; and what is still more rare and more important, he grew up in the midst of a family of the highest intelligence and distinction. Besides these advantages, he possessed a wonderful facility for every kind of acquirement. He completed his studies at the university by the early age of sixteen, and was thoroughly master of Greek and Latin, so that, at seventeen, his rendering of the Andria of Terence was greatly admired. He wrote and spoke English, French, and Italian as well as his own language, and was all his life fond of drawing and painting. He was a person of charming manners and appearance; he did not even fail to cultivate a love of sports, and the arts of fencing, of riding,

and of swimming occupied his leisure, whilst he excelled in all.

In the midst of all these numerous accomplishments, however, music ever held the foremost place. At eight years old he was so proficient, that he could read any music, even the fugues of Bach, at sight.

At twelve, being then a pupil of Zelter, who introduced him to Goethe, he deeply moved the latter, usually so immoveable, by his playing of a sonata of Beethoven.

Before the age of sixteen, he had written a first opera; at eighteen he had composed numerous works, and he came to London at twenty to have his first symphony performed.

All his career is stamped with the same marvellous facility and intellectual energy. He visited Italy in 1830—Paris in 1832. Although received in this city with the sincerest sympathy, and having great successes there, Mendelssohn was not satisfied with the visit. Besides, he had an attack of cholera there, which increased the unfortunate impression. It has been said that on leaving Paris, he declared it to be 'the grave of reputations.' And he never returned to France.

In England, everywhere a favourite; in Leipsic, admired and even worshipped by all; it was difficult for him to bear any mark of indifference or

of unpopularity. In spite of his being Director-General of Music to the King of Prussia, yet Berlin having behaved coldly towards him, he left that city, and rarely returned. Being of an intensely sensitive disposition, anything like competition or rivalry was intolerable to him, and caused him the greatest irritation. At Aix la Chapelle, in 1835, this occasioned F. Ries some annoyance and pain, when he directed the concerts of the festival there.

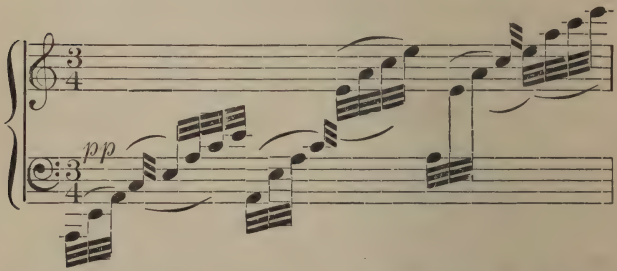
However, Mendelssohn was of most affectionate disposition, and capable of the greatest tenderness, and it is, in fact, true that his end was hastened by the repeated shocks occasioned to his devoted nature by the death of his father, then of his mother, and again of his most beloved sister. This last grief, the third great loss, proved to be more than he could bear, and was followed by successive attacks of apoplexy. His death took place only a short time after that of his sister, Madame Fanny Hensel, in 1847.

The music of Mendelssohn manifests genius, with profound knowledge of his art. He is the inventor of the genre 'Scherzi'—quite a speciality of his own, and which marks him out, in my opinion, as the interpreter, in particular, of the world of fantasy. Not indeed the same world that Weber opens to us; of malicious spirits,

mocking and mischief-loving phantoms, Mephistophelian in character. No! that of Mendelssohn is rather the aerial world of fairies. I think his brain must have been haunted by all the gnomes, sylphs, elves, and hobgoblins of the legends of old. The page of his Midsummer Night's Dream, in which he describes the airy dance of the sprites 'that fill the air during the fine nights,' is without rival, and even has no equal.

The 'Rondo Capriccioso' for the piano, and almost all his scherzi, owe their inspiration to the same source. Here we find the brightness, the agitation, the hurry of the tiny people. His 'Fantasia,' Op. 18, F minor, appears to me but another midsummer dream of the night.

In the capriccio, No. 1, Op. 23, at first we



have a prelude of harps, soft and low, as if one ought only to hear it in imagination. Then when one is fairly wafted into the land of dreams, the movement begins—it is rapid, pliant, airy, and the

melody is sweet, though slightly subdued ; and so it goes on running, flying across the modulations, like the elves of night across the bushes. Ah! we need not fear them, they do no harm, they are good spirits, merry too, and the friends of man! whom they may tease, but to whom they open up a phase of fancy, charming indeed. But we would we had a butterfly's wings, rather than hands, for rendering such delicious reveries!

A pianist of the first rank, Mendelssohn composed music that was excellent for study, as well as for execution, and shares with Clementi, Hummel, and Moscheles the most valuable quality, of their work being true *piano music.* The hand is always well placed, the position is natural, and complicated movements never exact from it fatiguing or ungraceful contortion.

His concertos, trios, and duets, of a purely classical form, are in this respect also classical.

His 'Lieder ohne Worte' are for the pianist what Schubert's 'Lieder' are for the singer, a collection of *chefs-d'œuvre*, short, but rich in colouring, and in sentiment also. For Mendelssohn has here and there lines, rare, it is true, but rich in the most refined expression of feeling. It could not be that a nature, so sensitive and affectionate that it dies beneath the grief of losing its beloved ones, should hide away entirely the innate fount

of its affections; it could not be, but that the stream must spring forth from time to time, however forcibly suppressed from the world's gaze.

In spite of the education of the 'man of the world,' which teaches concealment of all tenderness of feeling, as the ancients forbade the sentiment of compassion or pity, as a weakness unworthy great souls—the artist, alone with his dream, and his musical instrument, allows his inmost soul to shed its tears of love or sorrow; and posterity gathers together, with sacred care, these priceless drops from so revered a source; and they crystalise into gems nobler and more precious than any that Ceylon could ever boast.

Among the first of English musicians to recognise the genius of Mendelssohn, when in early youth he visited London, was Thomas Attwood, the noted composer, himself then full of years and honours.

Thomas Attwood was born in 1767—the son of a coal merchant—and player on the viola. At nine years old he entered the Chapel Royal as a chorister, and began to learn music. At fourteen he had to sing before the Prince of Wales, who took him under his protection, and sent him to Italy to learn singing and composition. He settled at Naples for a time, and then went to

Vienna, where he had the benefit of lessons and advice from the great Mozart. Returning to England in 1787, he became master of the Chapel Royal of the Prince of Wales, then of the Duchess of York, and the Princess of Wales. In 1795 he was made organist at St Paul's ; in 1796 composer to the Chapel Royal ; and finally, in 1821, was admitted member of the private chapel at Brighton.

He wrote a number of operas—at least thirteen ; also songs, and a great deal of church music, and notably the anthem, with chorus, for the coronation of George IV., which is of great beauty. He wrote sonatas for the pianoforte, and other pieces, and applied himself to teaching also. The music of Attwood is of a style peculiar for its classical taste and purity—its tone and power of expression. His piano music, which I made myself acquainted with many years ago, shows these qualities. It is astonishing, and much to be regretted, however, that it is not more known. Indeed, though by a composer of so much importance, as the last surviving pupil of Mozart, and the friend of Mendelssohn, it is hardly to be procured in these days, being even out of print.

Sterndale Bennett was born 13th August 1816, at Sheffield, in Yorkshire, and was the son of an

organist. His early education was obtained in his native town, whence he went to Cambridge, and later to London, where he entered the Royal Academy of Music. He afterwards became the pupil of Moscheles, and finally formed a close friendship with Mendelssohn. He followed him to Germany, where he continued his studies in composition under his direction. Their friendship was only disturbed by the death of Mendelssohn. After several years' sojourn in Germany, where many of his compositions were performed, and where he was greatly admired, Sterndale Bennett returned to London, occupied himself with teaching, but continued to compose, and gave concerts every year.

His works, besides being very well written, and thus giving evidence of his learning, are of wonderful grace and eminence, and highly classical. I seem to recognise in the features of his writing, the character of the true gentleman—of perfect manners, gentle indeed, polite, benevolent, a little dreamy, but of the kind of dreaminess which has in it nothing painful, only a charm. I do not think that we shall have our emotions excited or agitated in listening to the compositions of Sterndale Bennett; but they will have a tranquillising influence, shedding a balm on our spirits—casting a glow of pleasure—such as we see gilding all the landscape on a summer's evening.

It appears to me that, in his 'Rondo Piacevole,' full scope is given to this exquisite grace, and I therefore recommend that it should be studied and analysed, as also his Concerto in F minor for piano and orchestra.

And, on account of this quality in his compositions, as well as of the fluency of his melody, and of that melody's peculiar nature, I consider that the title of 'the Modern Mozart' once applied by Schumann to Brahms, would be more fittingly accorded to Sterndale Bennett.

Sterndale Bennett's sympathy with the piano was complete, and he loved, in his compositions for it, which were greater in number than his other writings—to bring out every quality belonging especially to this instrument.

He died February 1, 1875.

CHAPTER IX.

MODERN COMPOSERS—1830 TO 1884.

CHOPIN! the name is surrounded by a halo of poetry, and when we hear it, each face among us lights up into a smile.

In truth, Chopin's personality was one to inspire the warmest sympathy. Born at Warsaw, and banished, when still very young, with his family, his genius always retained its strictly Polish character, and it is to the melodies and dreams of his much-loved Poland that he owes his complete originality. If we say that his muse was inspired by that 'Mal du Pays,' which turns even the humblest peasant into a poet, we shall have written the whole story of Chopin; we may add that it eventually caused his death, though he lingered nearly to the age of forty, and was older, therefore, than Mozart or Schubert.

There is here no question of classical style, but we have the first of sick and feverish dreamers.

Whether he dreams aimlessly, with scarcely any distinct phrase of melody, or whether in the 'Mazurka' (which he was the first to introduce in our western regions), or in the valse, he dwells on the rhythms peculiar to the people of the north,—it is ever his beloved Poland that he evokes; not the warlike Poland, fighting and dying for her freedom, but rather the poetic feeling of the country, as expressed in the musical inspirations of its people.

Under the protection of this sweet, veiled, and weeping muse, he was the adored spoilt-child of the Parisian society in which he continually moved. They approved of his being always ill. His extreme irritability was considered an additional charm. Yet at times it was indeed excessive. I should like to relate an instance to prove that his adopted country was truly a most indulgent mother.

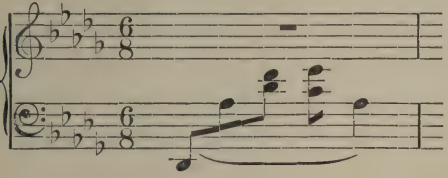
He had just finished certain compositions, and Camille Pleyel, who loved him like a son, invited all the rank and fashion of Paris to hear his performance of the new works. To go to the house of Camille Pleyel and hear Chopin! You may guess if there would be *one*, among those invited, fail to attend the *fête*. When the rooms are crowded, Chopin arrives, seats himself at the piano, runs his fingers over the keys, then suddenly

springs up and rushes from the room. A great commotion ensues, as one may imagine. After a long search, Pleyel at length discovers him shut up in a little dark room. He urges Chopin to tell him what is the matter, pointing out to him the embarrassing position in which he has placed him. At last, after many affectionate prayers and entreaties, Chopin says to him, 'You *will* know why I cannot play? Well, there is a gentleman standing at the end of the piano: his countenance paralyses me, and as long as he is there, it is quite impossible for me to perform.' We may picture to ourselves the embarrassment of Pleyel. However, it was necessary to do something; by dint of negotiation the gentleman was induced to change his place, and Chopin performed.

But I may repeat, that after the performance, it was always considered, that his nerves were perfectly in the right.

As I have before said, it is in his waltzes, mazurkas, and his nocturnes that the style of Chopin is best revealed, without calling attention to any one composition in particular. Unless it be to a somewhat curious and unique little piece, the 'Berceuse,' which is written on only two chords. This is called a continuous bass, and is applied in a most happy manner in a cradle song, for it

imitates the rocking of the cradle, whilst the imagination becomes lulled and dreamy.



Schumann!—the life of this composer having been already given in the chapter on modern music in the first part, we speak now only of his works.

Schumann belongs wholly to that modern school on which he has exercised so great an influence.

We will take, to begin with, the first Trio by him, Op. 63, in D minor, for the piano, violin, and violoncello. This is a beautiful, a great work, and a very characteristic one.

The first movement of this Trio is composed very much in the special manner of Schumann—that is to say, with fragments of phrases. There is no decided melody, not one complete idea. It would seem as if, always tormented by one thought, he tries to relieve himself of it, but the idea does not come to him distinctly, but only in portions, and fragments of it in fragments, by waiting and waiting,—the first movement, although long drawn out in the development,

ignoring all the ordained laws which constitute a classical work—that is to say, the rules for having a subject, then a counter-subject worked out with a development of the harmony or counterpoint, then a return to the first subject, and so on — ignoring, I say, all these classical methods, the first movement comes to an end, leaving us in expectation of a clearly expressed idea, which has never come, and therefore leaving us more agitated than satisfied.

The Scherzo is of a highly accentuated rhythm, and of prodigious *verve;* for it belongs to these dreamy and unhealthy natures to have bursts of mirth, of extreme vivacity and force, every condition with them being exaggerated.

The Adagio which follows is a master-piece of effect, without (correctly speaking) one musical idea, without rhythm of any kind, on which the mind can lean. It is vagueness itself, in the most poetic acceptation of the word, and it is indeed curious to see what intensity of emotion Schumann succeeds in producing by his strange succession of notes and chords, to which we give the name of 'Melopœia,' as we can find no other, and cannot liken it to any other known form in music. I have often played this Adagio, and always with the same effect; no one dared to speak during it, no one wished to do so.

Had he heard this himself during long hours

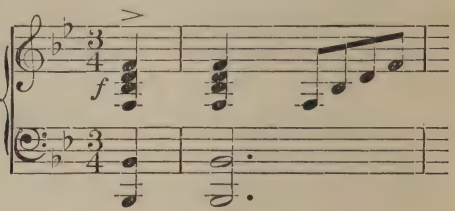
of the night, the shades of the great composers writing it down upon his pages? Did his imagination wander in the regions of infinity, and did it bring back from thence this ghostly sadness that seized his soul and lulled it with fascination; who knows?—for there is, properly speaking, no true poetry in these lines. It is the soul that lives alone, without body, its imaginings too being without definite form. As for me, I know not where I am, when I play or listen to this soft and indescribable reverie.

The Finale *has* one melodious idea of great animation, and another melodious idea of gentler strain. The form being that of a Rondo, it of course follows that these two airs are frequently repeated; and, in spite of very clever treatment, one cannot but find this finale rather too long. Schumann is (and after him all the other modern composers), in general, either too long or too short. The beauties of proportion are totally unknown to them.

A work for the piano *solo* of complete originality is the—'Carnival of Vienna'—by Schumann.* It is of thoroughly realistic character, in which every episode of that time of folly and extravagance is described—the noise, the gallantry, the

* Op. 26, 'Faschingschwank in Wien.'

passion, and wild and disorderly action. The first part, which consists of several movements broken



off by a sort of carnival *refrain*, is extremely ingenious, and as melodious as can be expected in such a mere sketch. The 'Romance' which follows does not convey many ideas to me. In my opinion it is more an interval of repose than a romance. The little 'scherzino' represents, no doubt, a masked promenade—a sort of conversation between a Harlequin and Columbine. Then follows an 'Appassionato,' and that species of 'Melopœia' quite peculiar to the genius of Schumann, in which a melodious thought appears to be begun, and then to repeat itself again and again to satiety, and without conclusion, somewhat resembling a restless, feverish dream. In the Finale he appears to me to be the most successful, and to have depicted the eddying crowd infatuated with pleasure, with whirling, and with noise, in a manner indicating marvellous power.

Altogether this is a great composition, of striking novelty, and one which no true musician can pass over without appreciation.

In general, however, the chamber music of Schumann is sufficiently according to rule. Thus his quatuors for the piano and stringed instruments, his quintett, are almost classical in form. But his style in his works for the piano solo is decidedly irregular. Perhaps for him, as for Beethoven, the piano was the only real confidante! His 'Lieder' for the voice, also, bear the stamp of revealing the inmost depth of feeling—and they have a marvellous power over the listener, though they are often composed merely of a single phrase.

A modern composer, with whom I am thoroughly sympathetic, is Joachim Raff, pianist, violinist, and composer, born 27th May 1822, at Lacken, on the Lake of Zurich, Switzerland. He died in 1882. His early youth was occupied with literature and science, although he had applied himself seriously to music, and was a good pianist. But in 1843 he was seized with a genuine passion for the art of music, and in a short time he published a great number of pieces for the piano.

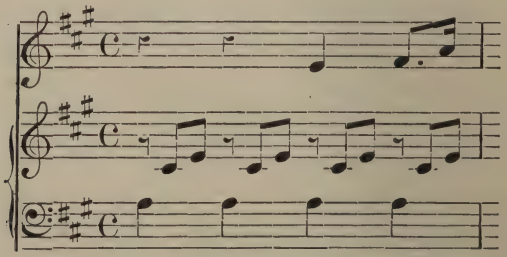
After 1850 he resided for different periods in various places in the Rhenish provinces, and devoted himself to teaching the piano, to composition, and to musical criticism in the magazines. He became an ardent admirer of Wagner, and wrote a work in his honour.

The immense scientific knowledge of Raff is felt in what he writes. We find there a harmonious subtlety that is incredible. He makes use of both the 'modes,' diatonic and chromatic, in a wonderful manner, and is extremely happy in bending the chromatic to his will. He seems to pass through the most difficult combinations without suspecting that the path is full of thorns and briars, and he finds his way back again to the diatonic high road as easily as if the proceeding had been only of the simplest kind. Raff was a highly learned man, a born musician and melodist, and one who was satisfied to remain such.

Raff's four sonatas for piano and violin, are four *chefs-d'œuvre.*

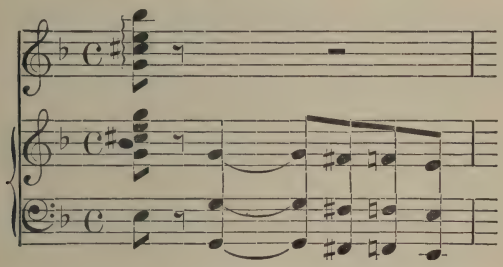
The first, in E minor, is of great originality, and reveals his admiration of the modern school. The 'Scherzo' conveys a rhythmical idea quite unknown before him.

The second sonata, in A major, is largely de-



veloped, and the exuberance of melodious ideas,

the rich combinations of harmonies, so delicate and so ingenious, the *verve*, the fulness, the originality, all unite to render this a most remarkable and exceptional work.

The third sonata is of simple and graceful style, —while the fourth is the most wonderful feat that

I know of,—in which science combines with spontaneous and ever-varying melody. It is called the ' Chromatic Sonata,' and fully justifies the title. It consists only of one part divided into three movements,—a short *introduction*, an *andante*, which contains a unique melodious phrase of the greatest beauty, and then of an *allegro*, which reveals all the power of the genius of Raff.

He wrote a fifth sonata, which I do not consider at all equal to these four ; also a quintette, which is splendid. He has written no great works for the piano *solo*.

Anton Rubinstein, our much-loved and highly

appreciated contemporary, was born, 12th November 1829 (according to the Russian calendar, the 30th November according to the Roman), at Wechwotynez, a village in Moldavia, on the frontier of Russia and Bessarabia. He had as instructors, first, his mother, a very good musician herself, who, observing his taste, taught him the first elements of music and of the piano ; afterwards Villoing, with whom he made such marvellous progress, that at nine years old he gave his first concert at Moscow. In 1839 he travelled with his master, and visited Paris. Here Liszt heard him, congratulated him, and urged him to work seriously, advising his master to take him to Germany. They travelled together in Holland, England, Germany, Sweden and Denmark. Returning to Russia in 1843, the young artist continued nearly a year, giving concerts almost without respite. Then his mother, finding in her second son, the little Nicolas, though only six years old, a rare talent for composition, took both her children to Berlin, to make them study the art of writing music, and they became pupils of Dehn. Nicolas had to return to Russia on his father's death in 1846, and subsequently settled at Moscow.

Anton, who till 1847 had not shown any special gift for composition, had at this epoch a sudden revelation of his own power, and became aware

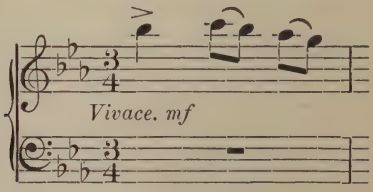
of the individual style of his talent for the superior part of musical art. He now threw himself completely into it ; and although almost always travelling about, giving a vast number of concerts, besides lessons, he produced a very large amount of work. Fifty of his compositions can be reckoned between 1848 and 1857, including four operas, an Oratorio, four symphonies, six quatuors, two overtures, one octette, etc.

As a pianist, the great talent and power of Rubinstein is widely known and appreciated.

As a composer, Rubinstein, in my opinion, owes to his nature, which is truly Russian or Sclavish, and which is therefore partly wild, partly intensely sensitive—the double character that pervades his music ; for it possesses infinite delicacy, infinite refinement, side by side with the wildest impetuosity. His somewhat nomadic life has also influenced his works, and given them a stamp of improvisation. He, however, shows considerable respect for the rules of the art, and his music, although rather lacking decision of plan, is what musicians call 'well written ;' that is to say, without too many intricacies and discords, and without gambols either in the harmonies or melodies. Then he has great originality, and a voluptuous grace, that is truly *feline* (if I may so express it), in his phrases and intermediate harmonies, which

seem to me to belong especially, as I remarked before, to his national character.

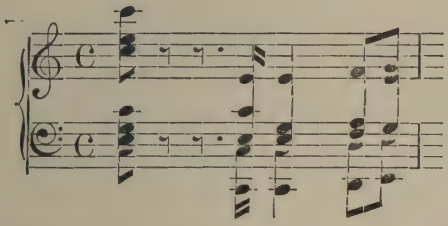
I will recommend my readers to take up the 'Valse Caprice,' of Anton Rubinstein. It is a work of true charm, and which, in its little, separate frame, portrays faithfully its author.



Another contemporary of ours, Brahms, born on 7th March 1833, is the son of a double bass player at the Hamburg Theatre, and began his studies when very young. A pianist of great talent, he performed in public at the age of thirteen, and obtained the most brilliant successes. His productions were also so remarkable, that Schumann, in a fit of enthusiasm concerning them, wrote in the *Leipsic Gazette* that Brahms would be the Mozart of the nineteenth century. In respect to his precocity, I agree with him, but otherwise the resemblance does not seem to me very great; the one being the model of proportion, and the other setting no bounds whatever to his fancy; the former being a melodist of the finest grace and of highest order, and without

deep passion; the latter, a melodist also, I grant it, but violent, impassioned, carried away, dashing in his melodies.

Is it perhaps thus that we may draw the characteristics of the two epochs?

Brahms' sonata, Op. 1, in C major, is very original, I might almost say extraordinary.

We feel the youthfulness of the composer, in that the harmonic deductions are pushed to the extreme, without caring about the prolongation of the dissonances, which strike one therefore as somewhat harsh; but the youthfulness is also felt in the true originality of the melody, and in an abundant inspiration. The first movement, though very didactic, has a phrase so musical, it is to my mind simply exquisite; like the head of a beautiful young girl appearing suddenly in the midst of a group of rough and quarrelling students.

An ancient German song is the theme for the variations of the Andante which follows:—

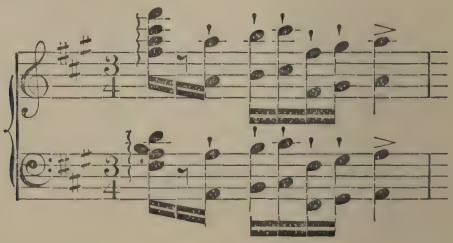
Verstohlen geht der Mond auf,
Cho. Blau, blau Blümelein.
Durch Silberwölkchen führt sein Lauf:
Cho. Blau, blau Blümelein
Rosen im Thal, Mädel im Saal
O schönste Rose!

The moon glides above,
Cho. Blue, blue flowret.
Silver clouds follow its course:
Cho. Blue, blue flowret
Roses in the valley, maidens in the hall,
O fairest Rosa!

The variations have an exquisite charm, and they end by, as it were, vanishing into the distance, as if the chorus that has been singing embark in a boat, and move slowly away over the waters of the Rhine, beneath the splendour of a starlit night.

The Scherzo is lively, joyous, rapid, and like a party of students calling, laughing or fighting.

Then the Finale resembles the movement of a crowd on a fair-day, the going and coming to and fro, without a purpose and without a care. Presently a martial 'refrain' is heard, and alternating with this strain, there are sweet love passages going on in low tones. I think the episode of Faust and Margaret is not without recognition in the Finale, if not throughout the Sonata.

But the second Sonata of Brahms has a real fascination for me.

It is written in F sharp minor—a melancholy key, indeed, if ever there was one! My applying the term 'melancholy' to a key, need be no matter of surprise; for every key has its own individual shade of expression. (A subject to which I shall return later.)

This Sonata then is in F sharp minor. It has borrowed from the Classics its unity of key, also the requisite counterpoint in the second part; but it has, in addition, more fully developed introductions, musical phrases, which clash together and break off abruptly like sobs; a sonorousness which sometimes cries aloud; and it has also the softest possible lights and shadows. It is, indeed, after the first movement, like the rending asunder of a soul in trouble.

The Andante is, in my opinion, a sort of conversation between several people who are meditating out in the woods. Then (Scherzo) the hunt comes by, with its songs, its sounds, even the baying of the hounds. All is there, and all is well rendered, for we have not a single note *de trop!*

Finally, the last movement is a poem in itself. It opens with a grand and beautiful introduction —like the portico of a temple. It is the human heart which is about to reveal itself to you, and to admit you to its confidences. Read! Listen! recollect past hours of sorrow, which are not un-

known even in the happiest lives, and then say if, when under the blast of adversity, you have ever heard your own woes expressed with such a reality.

Brahms has composed another work that is truly magnificent—his quintette for the piano with stringed instruments.

A young modern composer, and an interesting one, is Edward Grieg, born at Bergen, in Norway, 19th June 1853. He is truly the Scandinavian Chopin, for his pen is almost entirely devoted to the songs and dances of his native land, his dear Norway, where he is living. He is settled as Professor of his art at Christiania, whence he is seldom absent.

His inspiration, drawn from the national genius, gives to Grieg's works an altogether special character.

The songs of the people, particularly of the northern peoples, have a tinge of sadness even in their gaiety. The minor key dominates, but the leading note is often omitted, which increases the dreamy charm, by not completely satisfying the ear, which is thus kept, and is left, somewhat in suspense. It is like the perspectives of snow, undefined by any line at the horizon, melting into air, and leading the mind to wander over it to the mystic 'yonder.'

I here close my rapid sketch of our modern composers, although our age furnishes many more for the piano, in France, in England, in Germany, and Italy, and indeed everywhere. But we must pile volume on volume if we would make room for all, and such indeed is not my intention. I have only spoken of the most eminent, and the most celebrated to the present day.

I designedly have thus far omitted mention of the most accomplished and most marvellous of pianists, Franz Liszt, in the past pages, on account of his life presenting a double character, and that I have wished, in consequence, to devote, to this great man, a special chapter.

CHAPTER X.

FRANZ LISZT—1811 to 1884.

THE career of Liszt ought to be divided into two very diverse epochs. His youth—when he was simply the most marvellous of musical acrobats—and his mature age—when he became one of the most ardent apostles of the modern school.

The biography of Franz Liszt has been so well given by Fétis, that I have only to reproduce it, for I have nothing to add.

Liszt was born, 22d October 1811, at Roeding, a village in Hungary, near Pesth. His father, Adam Liszt, was employed in managing the property of Prince Esterhazy, was a good musician, and engaged in the chapel also by the prince; and it was here Adam Liszt formed a friendship with Haydn, who died two years before the birth of Franz. In his sixth year the youthful Liszt showed his delightful feeling for music by attentively listening to his father, who was playing the

concerto of Ries in C sharp minor, and in the evening, singing the theme and the principal melodies. From that moment he was taught the piano. His natural disposition for melancholy subjects was made evident later on by the passionate interest with which he read the 'René' of Chateaubriand. During six months this book was constantly in his hands, and he was often discovered shedding tears as he perused its pages. He performed in public for the first time when he was nine years old, at Oldenburg; and though he was ill with fever at the beginning of the concert, he played the concerto by Ries in E flat, and an improvised Fantasia, in a manner which excited the liveliest astonishment. Prince Esterhazy, who heard him, caressed and praised the boy, giving him a present of fifty ducats. Soon after this, he began his travels with his parents, and they went to Presburg. He there found two patrons, in the Counts Amaden and Zopani, who joined in ensuring for him a pension of six hundred florins during six years, with the object of enabling him to complete his education. And thus his father now found that the dreams he had indulged in, of Franz Liszt's future prosperity, began already to be realised. He took the boy to Vienna, and entrusted him to Czerny's instruction. His first lessons, however, wounded the pride of the young

pupil—for Czerny gave him the Sonatas of Clementi to study, which he despised as beneath his powers, and played through with an air of contempt. It was necessary to resort to greater difficulties; soon they seemed hardly great enough for the child-pianist even in the works of Beethoven and of Hummel. It is related with regard to this, that on one occasion young Liszt being with other artists at the house of the editor who had just published Hummel's concerto in B minor, he played it without hesitation at sight. This adventure was soon noised abroad, it was talked of all over Vienna, and everybody wished to hear the young virtuoso. The price agreed upon between Adam Liszt and Czerny for a certain number of lessons was three hundred florins, but when the sum was offered him Czerny refused to take it, declaring he was recompensed sufficiently by the success of his pupil. During the eighteen months Liszt was studying with Czerny, he had some lessons in composition from the aged Salieri.

After this epoch he gave his first concert—the most celebrated artists assisted at it, and predicted a splendid career for the precocious boy. It was then that Liszt and his family turned their steps towards Paris, everywhere giving concerts with the most triumphant results. Adam Liszt had in-

tended to make him enter the Conservatoire, and to place him with Cherubini for the study of counterpoint; but the fact of his being a foreigner was an obstacle to this project, which even the letters of M. de Metternich himself in recommendation of him could not overcome. It was at the beginning of the year 1823 that Liszt had arrived in Paris; and during that season he performed at several concerts, at the opera, and excited as much astonishment as pleasure. It was not only as one of those child prodigies, of which there had often been examples, that he appeared, but it was as a musician already, and one as remarkable for his *aplomb* as for his vast brilliancy of execution. His improvisations were not rich in ideas, but they indicated on the part of their author an extraordinary intelligence concerning *effect*, and much *sang-froid* in the conduct of the performance. Soon everybody was talking only of 'le petit Liszt,' and this title became so familiar that he was still spoken of by it, for years after he had grown to be a man.

In spite of his triumphs, his study of the piano continued very severe, under his father's direction; for he obliged his son to play twelve fugues by Bach every day, and to transpose them all by improvising into all the keys; and it is to this labour that he owes the prodigious power he

possessed both for reading and executing at sight every kind of music, however difficult it might be. In May 1824 he came with his father to London, and was not less successful at the Court of George IV. than he had been in Paris, whither he returned in September of the same year, resuming his studies and beginning to compose. The year following they were in London again, and made an abundant harvest from concerts. Then again back in Paris, Liszt was urged by his father to write some Sonatas, Fantasias, Variations, and even an opera, 'Don Sanché, ou le Chateau de l'amour,' which was represented at the Opera of Paris, October 17, 1825, and which was listened to with indulgence, on account of the interest which was attached to the name of the young musician.

In February 1826, Liszt and his family left Paris, in order to visit the principal towns of France. His concerts at Bordeaux, Toulouse, Montpellier, Nimes, Marseilles, and Lyons were a succession of triumphs.

However, hitherto his knowledge of composition had come to him rather by instinct and by observation than by continuous and systematic study. The desire for better instruction was much felt by him at this period. Reicha was given the direction of his studies, and made him begin

a course, which, however, was never finished, in consequence of a strange sentiment of mystical and contemplative devotion, which at this time began to cloud and interpenetrate his mind. During their progress, these sentiments had the effect of giving him a distaste for that art, which hitherto had occasioned him severe constraint, rather than real enjoyment. His new inclinations, always combated by his father, only grew the stronger, so, to tear him away from his too precocious meditations, he was made to travel, and for the third time he visited England, after a journey through Switzerland. It was on their return from London on this occasion that he lost his father at Boulogne.

Then, at length, the time had arrived for him to be free, and to be able to have his faculties at his own service—a happiness which he could appreciate the more fully that, until then, he had never known anything else but the despotism of a will far stronger than his own. Poor child! they had traded on his precocious intelligence; they had carried him hither and thither in foreign lands, to extort the tribute of admiration of his infantine years. It was truly surprising that under so rude a trial, his childish vanity had not been the bane of his talent, as has happened with so many others. Happily the

love of his art was as powerful with him as the thirst for fame. Now that he was master of his own actions, he understood, in the midst of his irresolution, that, in order to ensure to the grown-up man, triumphs comparable to those which the child-prodigy had obtained, he must surpass other men in the feats he should perform—and his courage shrank not from the enormous labour which must be entailed to achieve such an end.

The most persevering practice of the mechanical part of his art seemed to him imperative—in order that no difficulty should retard him, and that his fingers should, without fail, be able to carry out whatever his mind might dictate. From that time forward, for several years, he was not seen; his playing was not heard; the course of his life was hidden from the world's gaze—but when he did return, it was to astound all listeners by the incomparable velocity of his fingers, their amazing power of conquering every difficulty, and their aptitude for the right expression of every note.

In the middle of his work a serious illness took him by surprise, from which his recovery was scarcely completed under two years. This illness contributed to the development of his religious tendency. His devotions became austere, and much of his time was occupied in churches, which

he loved to frequent. All of a sudden, he seemed to break off from these mystic habits—he returned to the world, and resumed a cheerful demeanour. It is thus that we often observe in Liszt strong contrasts of feeling, and changes of tastes, and of opinions. Even his talent took by turns different characters. Notwithstanding the excess of enthusiasm which he met with every time he performed in public, it might be observed, in the frequent changes of system in his compositions, that he was not himself satisfied, and that uncertainty always agitated his mind. He had been reproached for giving up too much to the mechanical work of the fingers. He wished to prove that there was within him an abundant fire of inspiration, and he set himself to improvise, to some extent, his own fantasies on the works of the finest composers—hardly reckoning these as more than themes, on which he might make variations and modifications at his will.

He himself recognised later his mistake, and has explained it in these terms:—

'I at that time frequently executed, both in public and in drawing-rooms (where people never failed to object to my selection of pieces), the works of Beethoven, Weber and Hummel, and I confess, to my shame, that, in order to excite the applause of a public, always slow to recognise beautiful

things in their august simplicity, I made no scruple of altering the movement and its meaning—I even went so far as insolently to add to it a crowd of ornaments, pauses, freaks of my own, which, though gaining me the acclamation of an ignorant public, came near to dragging me into a wrong road, from which, however, I happily escaped.'

After this confession from the greatest of all executionists on the piano, I proceed no further. What *can* be said, after such lines as these, in evidence that it is possible for all to be sacrificed to the passion for applause? There is an end of conviction, an end to the reverence for genius! If the mob do not roar 'bravo,' we have the first master-pieces mutilated, their pure images defaced —their most beautiful notes are made to shriek— and all this done knowingly, voluntarily, and with the sole end of satisfying a sickly vanity!

About this period Liszt wrote some Fantasias on operatic airs. Here at least he had some excuse; the piano cannot pretend to vie with the stage scene, and it is simply the melody from the opera rendered *inexpressive* which is used for the theme of his Fantasia by the performer.

He also composed a number of 'Transcriptions,' and here we can admire him without reserve, for he attained to a wonderful effective power, and he

makes it almost possible on a simple piano to give the overtures of William Tell, of Oberon, etc., etc.

I admire less his transcriptions of the melodies of Schubert. To rob them of their words, is to unpoetise these exquisite poems.

It is after this period that we reach the second part of the life of Liszt.

We have seen Liszt as the marvellous virtuoso, and sacrificing even music itself to this virtuosity.

The political events of 1848 and 1849 having put a stop to his travels, Liszt settled at Weimar, and assumed the functions definitively of chapel-master to the Grand Duke. From this time forward a complete transformation takes place in his career. In my opinion, it is from this moment that he becomes the artist, in the highest sense of the word. By his care the chapel music of the Grand Duke was improved and raised to such a point, that great performances were confided to him.

Liszt found in the works of Wagner the kind of music which suited his mind, ardently dissatisfied and restless as it was, and also the tendencies towards which he was being carried.

And, it is a glory in the character of Liszt that, at this moment, after Wagner had been exiled as a revolutionist, and his opera of 'Tannhäuser' had hopelessly fallen through at Dresden in 1848, and

when the 'Music of the Future' was in danger of perishing at its birth,—Liszt, strong in his convictions, undertook to raise it up, and succeeded in attracting to it the attention of all Europe, by his performances, as well as by his influence, direct or indirect, upon the public press ; while he skilfully made use of every political phase that might redound to the fame or excite sympathy in favour of the exile. 'Tannhäuser' lived again, 'Lohengrin' saw the light, and a party of upholders was created round them.

And here Liszt commands my admiration ; for, with an energy that was truly magnificent, he encouraged what he believed to be the truth in his art, without fear and without weakness. He had been long feeling a desire for the 'new thing' in music, and his own taste led him towards the picturesque. He had also natural aspirations after grandeur, and every development in this direction was in sympathy with him.

As a pianist, he had enlarged the means of execution to such an extent, that he may be said to have *invented* the piano-orchestra. His transcription of opera-overtures for the piano are really of wonderful superiority, comprising as they do all the salient points of the score, and they give the effect of the work more perfectly than one could have thought possible. Later, he con-

ceived the idea of allying the organ with the piano, and he urged Alexander the organ builder to make experiments that resulted in the 'Piano-melodium.' On its appearance, some sensation was produced, but Liszt before long took a dislike to it, and came to the conclusion that the piano and organ are not suited to go together—each instrument having a power of expression, and consequently a vocation, peculiar to itself.

We see then, that he was quite ready to receive the new school, whose stamp of the *grandioso*, insists on large masses of executants, to render it at all; and he thought, in all sincerity, that he here had found his ideal of perfection.

It was therefore as a real apostle that he devoted himself to the glorification of Wagner, and the sacrifice that I commend the most highly, though it is the least spoken of, and that appears to me to be truly heroic, lies in his contentment to become *second!* This self-denial, especially for an artist who, like Liszt, had known all the sweets of flattery and admiration, and had lived on them as a bird lives on the air above it, such a sacrifice appears to me to attain to the sublime.

From this time forth, Liszt's own compositions followed the track of the composer he preferred.

He aims at the 'picturesque,' and his symphonic

poems attest the laborious nature of his efforts. I do not here form a judgment, I do not even speak of his orchestral works, which do not lie in the direction of our study ; but, for the piano, we have gained through him some works of the descriptive style, which are of considerable value.

Thus, the legend of St Francis de Paul is truly a master-piece in his own particular manner. St Francis is crossing the straits of Messina on foot, walking on the waves—the mariners having refused him a passage on board their vessels, on account of his appearance of poverty. The canticle of the saint is calm ; but we hear that he walks while he is singing—then the voice ceases ; the angry waves are heard, roaring, yet curbed, in their fury, and groaning beneath the restraint ; terrifying to all, but to him whose eyes are gazing up to Heaven. The stupefaction of the crowd, then their wild agitation on witnessing the miracle, running forward to fall on their knees to him, whom they had before repulsed,—then the benediction of the saint, and his last Amen as he departs from them ; all is admirable for the truth, the perfection of the proportions, and the correctness of the emphasis.

Moreover, Liszt had long since fulfilled the mystical aspirations of his early youth, and I think the retirement of his cell must have helped

him to comprehend the devout ardour of saintly men, and thus to bring these legends within the limits of possible expression. 'The descriptive' in this case, where it is a poetic sentiment that dominates, lies within the domain of Music.

The Innovators, meanwhile, allow themselves to be the victims of a capricious and continual deception, and refuse to believe the fact that they will never succeed in doing anything truly great and truly beautiful, but by submitting to what they call 'the old method.'

And, after all, is it not perhaps the only *true* method?

CHAPTER XI.

RICHARD WAGNER—1840 TO 1883.

I SHALL be pardoned, I feel sure, if I introduce here the name of Richard Wagner, although he has not written for the piano, as his influence has extended over all the domain of music. All artists, to whatever school they belong, have united in mourning his untimely death, for all acknowledge him a genius.

During their life, the littlenesses, the vanities, the party prejudice of great men may irritate their contemporaries and inflame discussion; and Wagner had many littlenesses, and his vanity was unbounded. But when death has come to efface these mistakes and faults, the man's work stands out free from the defects of the individual, and, in the case of Wagner, I feel it is incontestable that *his* work was truly great. At once, even unwittingly, we pronounce him to be a genius, when we say of him, what, from its general acceptance, is

become quite a common-place term for him,—that he is the 'creator of a school!'

Doubtless he was not entirely alone in his discovery of this new path. It would seem that the later works of Beethoven pointed towards it. Schumann, before Wagner, had sought it. But has not every great intelligence had its forerunners? Besides the longing for novelty, the new in all things, is natural to the human mind, and without such desire, it were better that the world should come to an end.

It is the Creator of the universe alone who can, in resting from this work, declare all to be 'good,'* and give laws to the whole, that remain immutable.

And Wagner was born in an age of unrest—in which all men seemed possessed by a giddy longing for change in everything. In every branch of intellectual life, as I have before shown, they desired to act, if not better, at least differently to their predecessors.

It had taken ages for music to come out of the region of speculation, then in three centuries it had developed on bases that were possible and comprehensible, — and in the ideal domain it could hardly advance further.

And could music remain immoveable when all

* 'And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.'—Genesis i. 31.

around was in agitation? No! Interpreter of the thoughts and passions of men, these must she ever follow, in every stage, in every modification, for good or for evil.

Thus it was impossible but that a Wagner should be born in our age.

I know not why his music has been called the 'music of the future.' Certainly future generations must judge us through his accents—but these are inspired by our own time, and are only the echo of our own distress.

The works of Wagner contain, scattered throughout them, beauties of the highest order; and the mind that could have originated the overture of 'Tannhäuser' (to cite but one instance), has written for immortality.

But it is only too true, that side by side with these pages there are not only obscurities, but especially an abuse of dissonances, which appear to me quite indefensible.

I know that in reply to those who wonder at the great length of his phrases, which are suffocating, and appear also to lose distinctness by diffusion, it may be said, 'Your breath is not long enough, it is your own fault!' To those who complain, 'But this music has not the principle of tonality,' may be answered, 'You have such old prejudices; you like the diatonic style, we prefer the chromatic.

Try to like it as we do.' In short, to those who love melody, the reply may be, 'But we prefer Melopœia. So much the worse for you if it appear to you monotonous.'

But to those who ask, 'Whither does all this lead?' what can be said, unless that music is now to be made to quit the region of the ideal, and to be realistic and descriptive. And is it really to this point we are to come? From Melopœia then, we shall fall into Onomatopœia, and he will be the great artist who can imitate unmistakably the dog, the horse, or the elephant, etc., etc.

No! music cannot, ought not to lead to the realistic, to the materialistic. Music is of the domain purely of the spiritual, and is the language of our sentiments. It is descriptive only within certain limits, and I confess with satisfaction that in this sense some progress has been made; but if it bring us face to face with nature, it must be only by recalling the emotion which nature herself has been wont to excite in us. It gives expression not to our *sensations*, but to our *emotions*, and it is madness to wish to force it farther.

Again, it should be restricted within ordinary limits of power, or it loses its power over us, by overtaxing the nerves. If the phrase be too long,

if it be of indefinite form, our mind rejects it. If the crash of sound be too loud, either we are deafened by it, or should our ears endure it, they get accustomed to it, and the effect is *nil*, the result being in either case the same.

I do not, therefore, believe in the future of the school of Wagner. And I venture even to add that I do not wish for its triumph among the young advancing generations, dreading lest this sublime art, music, should fall from its high pedestal, and, as I have already said, and repeat once more, sink either into chaos, by the refusal to follow just laws, or into a state of *triviality*, by the abuse of 'the descriptive.'

Nevertheless, Wagner I must admire and respect, for the genius which beautifies so many of his pages. May I not add that I pity him for having striven to pass the limits which nature has assigned to his art? He must have cruelly suffered, for he had no doubt lofty aspirations!

He made the whole world vibrate by dint of his vast energy; he brought together an army of musicians; he kindled, by the fire of his own convictions, singers and performers; conquered peoples and kings to his idea; promised to all that the lofty school that he was founding should transform everything, send all his forerunners to oblivion, and should set up music at such a

height, that one must be a demi-god to attain to it; and yet—he achieved for the greater number of these people, and (I am convinced) for himself also, chiefly *disappointment.*

It is not difficult to me to feel that, probably, here was the secret woe that broke the heart of Wagner. To be truly great only in respecting the laws one has endeavoured to overthrow, is surely, for an innovator, a chastisement more easily understood than described.

This was the case with Wagner. Those dazzling pages of his, those that will survive as immortal beauties, and will form the aureola of glory around his name, are those which, written on the basis of the Fundamental Key, have phrases comparatively short, with second phrases introduced to complete the first, as with other great composers. But the melodious ideas are in these cases admirable; the inspiration has been full and rich, with a style of largeness which belongs entirely to Wagner. Whilst supporting a splendid melody, there is a fine sonorous harmony—learned, rich in modulation, without crash, without painful cry; we have here a result that is so wonderfully beautiful that it excites the respect of all.

The other compositions are torturing to the listener, and to the student and thinker. One seeks to understand his meaning; and failing

in this, one begins to doubt if he himself understood it.

We owe to him a certain improvement in harmonies, and in the descriptive style. But we must regret that he should have sought to philosophise with his notes, instead of composing true music, simple and pure. But, alas! 'simplicity' does not belong to our time, and we cannot insist upon it in our composer. Wagner knew it not; for we have banished it from every part of our lives.

PART III.

On Style and Examination.

CHAPTER I.

'L'ACCENT.'

FROM what we have learnt in this history of music, and in the lives of the principal composers, it is easy to deduce that the music of the different epochs, and *that* of the different composers in each epoch, must severally have possessed a character peculiar to the period when it was produced, as well as to the individual nature of each of the composers.

Thus, if we take a work of the sixteenth century or of the beginning of the seventeenth, we must set out by remembering that the instruments of that day had no power of sustained resonance (*sonorité*), and that the aspirations of the composers themselves did not demand this quality of them. The music of the harpsichord consisted, properly speaking, of 'divertissements,' in which

ingenious combinations formed the principal aim of musical art. In reproducing these works, therefore, it is important that we should subdue the sonority of the modern instrument, the piano; play them with the tips of the fingers, give as much suppleness as possible to the movement of the hammers, which is done by the finger, and great clearness to those parts that are at all loud. So much for the style of the epoch; but if, for instance, we take, in this epoch, Scarlatti and Bach, we must, in our execution, make Scarlatti and Bach recognisable, by our manner of performing the work of each. The one lively, cheerful, fast in his compositions, and pre-occupied concerning the effect produced by the executant upon his listeners; the other, serious, calm, and bent on the careful completion of his compositions, through the logical deductions taught by the rules, and without the least caring about the opinions of others, happy in the creating of a pure work; then, locking away his manuscript in a cupboard with a hundred others, and thinking of it no more.

When we reflect on the vast difference in the natures of these two men, we understand that it is impossible there should be any similarity in their style.

But what is this *style?* (so finely interpreted by

the French word *accent*). We can hardly analyse it. It is the indescribable, the '*je ne sais quoi*' in art. It is the divine gift in each of the great masters, which characterises and differentiates their contemporary work. It is this individuality that the performer ought to endeavour to reproduce —by impregnating himself, through long meditation on the life of the composer, with his nature, his tone of thought, his temperament, and by trying to imagine him living and acting, so as to enter into sympathetic intimacy with him. Thus, aided by imagination, the performer will find, by observing the most minute signs in the notation of the composer, the luminous point which will give the characteristic *accent;* for the manner of writing is a faithful mirror of each writer.

Scarlatti, for example, generally wrote tripping phrases ; and his binding marks—slurs, always end with a staccato note. He rarely has prolonged notes ; every chord is clear, and does not encroach upon its neighbour. His style is joyous, and has nothing of learned or grave in it. He does not think deeply ; he does not study combination ; he is content to amuse himself and others, and thus supplies sweetness and gaiety, which are quite characteristic of this amiable and beneficent genius who, in all his life, had never an unkind word for anybody.

Bach, on the other hand, was a learned man, and although of a calm and benevolent disposition, he was graver, and his convictions were stronger. He treated with contempt the songs, 'chansons,' of the Italian opera, founded upon melody, and called at that time 'free music.' And what we call 'expression,' was entirely banished from the interpretation of his works. He took a subject, then a contra-subject, and with these simple materials he wrote pages of combinations, of a richness astonishing even to students in this art of combination,—but always logical, and never leaving the range of mathematics. By the same power of numbers that enables the astronomer, such as our renowned Leverrier, to calculate the position of unknown planets, Bach would arrive at unexpected modulations. We find, too, that Bach gives no indications of requiring gradations of sound in his compositions. F and P were sufficient for him, and *must* suffice.

In order to play Bach, the fingers ought to be well under command, since, in whatever part the subject appears, that it may be distinctly heard, it ought to be given with the loud fingers, or the soft fingers, with the thumb, or the fifth finger of either hand. The F and P were moderate in effect, because the instrument was feeble, and also since violent contrasts do not

belong to movements which are the outcome of calculation, and are a logical concatenation. It is, therefore, especially distinctness that we should here seek to give, and vibrations that are loud, and therefore, of course, prolonged, will destroy this distinctness.

The writing of Bach shows the method that his mind pursued, and how logical was this method, passing on from deduction to deduction. There are incessantly chords in preparation ; we find one or more notes bound up with successive chords, and acting as transition notes between them — imaging permanent succession.

In contrast of these two powerful and healthy natures, I will now take the works of two morbid composers, Chopin and Schumann.

On first casting our eyes over a page of Chopin's compositions, we are struck by the number of accidentals, flats, sharps, and naturals which he introduces. The reason of this is, in fact, that the first requirement of uneasy spirits is the alteration of the key, and even the choice among keys of those that are by their very nature the most expressive of pain. This demands some explanation.

I refer to the phenomenon, neither to be disputed nor explained, but which is fully recognised,

of the difference in the effect of different keys. All those keys whose fundamental note is a natural note, as C major—as G A E D, and those that have their fifths also on natural notes —are clear, brilliant, sonorous, open,—one may almost say, healthy. Those keys whose fundamental notes are flat, B flat, E flat, A flat, D flat, are soft, and somewhat veiled. But those whose bass notes are sharps (and there are but few in the major, as we have only F sharp and C sharp) are hard and distressing.

There is also the great difference between the major and minor keys—the first as natural to us as the air we breathe, and which is suitable to a calm and happy or an enthusiastic mood. The second, born of the melancholy which is inherent in the human soul, and which casts its mantle over all our joys; just as the ambient air casts its azure veil over nature, to soften her outlines, to poetise the horizon, and make us dream of the infinite, far beyond the blue heaven above us.

But if you carry this melancholy tone on to a minor key with sharps, you will have not only melancholy, but also discomfort, and even pain. The sharp is, as we know, like an accute accent placed on the semitone; and although our instruments, being made with a view to temperament,

are false in reality, yet we have so strongly the feeling of this acuteness, that our nerves suffer a sensation of pain we cannot define. Experience teaches us this every day. Thus, by instinct, all composers of an unhappy tone of mind, turn to these keys for expressing their emotions. F sharp minor, C sharp minor, D or G sharp minor. But even this does not suffice them, for there is a relative calm, in a key or tonality long sustained. Therefore, as I have shown before, they are perpetually changing even these painful tonalities. If you have taken your seat in an extremely uncomfortable chair, you may accustom yourself to the cramping attitude, and cease to be aware of it. Thus, too, if you establish the key upon an acute bass, your ears, and, therefore, your nerves, may accustom themselves to this key, and comparatively suffer from it no longer. But these tortured spirits cannot be quiet; they must ever be complaining, because they bear about them a grief that cannot be consoled.

Such a spirit was Chopin, and his music is even as himself. It is the reflection of his constant suffering. It comes, it goes, borrows every accidental, hangs despairingly on every semitone, seeks on all sides expression for his pain, the echo of his lament, the pathway to repose, a repose which, alas! the grave alone can give him.

It is only a very poetic mind that can understand Chopin and interpret him properly. Chopin knew what he sighed for, and in his reveries he seemed to be fanned by the breezes of his beloved Poland. We must then give, in the soft notes of airy passages, the gentle breath of the wind wafted from his native land. Then, also, the poetry of the north has a stamp quite peculiar to itself. The Sclavonic legends are peopled with phantoms, now of fierce warriors, now of fond maidens, and all this ideal world it is, that should haunt the brain, when we take up the creations of their exiled poet. The loud parts should be almost hard, the lighter portions like the zephyr itself, the sadness, a mortal sadness, for it caused his death. We see then, that the performer must be ready to plunge himself into the stream of his sorrows, who would give the individual style of Chopin. And is this so difficult? No, doubtless, for who is there that has not some regret in the deep of the heart? who does not feel, in some degree, exiled, in this life below? who does not aspire, more or less fervently, to a happiness completed; to the true Fatherland of which the perfumed breezes we already feel,—reviving, re-animating our souls in the hours of discouragement.

Schumann is quite different, although he also

had his sorrows ; but his malady is less ideal. He does not lament a lost country ; he is seeking a path unknown. His desire was to invent a new species of music, and as that is difficult, his ideas are often far from manifest.

That which at first strikes us most vividly in reading his music, is the shortness of his phrases, and their continual repetition. If reminds us somewhat of the kaleidoscope ; there seem to be different patterns, as it were, of an interesting mosaic, but on attentively observing it, we perceive only slices of glass reflecting, repeating one another, but with no real connection between them. His thought could not disentangle itself enough to take a definite form, and produce a picture. Some of his works certainly are clear. Thus his Quintette is a homogeneous composition,—and except one passage, in which his indefinite reverie reappears, all is consecutive and hangs together ; but this is relatively exceptional with him. Then the strong, clashing shadows must be duly rendered, in performing the works of this master, who exacts a thorough command of the execution, and great power, since, side by side with pages of light, hysterical writing, we find, in his orchestral compositions, a mighty verve, a vivacity of amazing colour, dashing in without any preparation, without transition. You must pass from the one to the

other instantaneously, and have the fingers ready to play the most complicated and brilliant passages, after a Melopœia that has fatigued the mind by its plaintive notes, seeming to pursue one fugitive idea, and which pains you like the cry of a drowning man. All the power of our splendid modern instruments, and all the power, force, and dexterity of highly-trained execution, are not too much for Schumann ; but the mind must keep itself free, in order to follow the composer, through the thousand meandering tracks of his ideas. The great difficulty in the interpretation of Schumann, is, that one must remain calm, and master of the mechanical power, in the midst of a transport of sound often madly impassioned.

The two composers I have next selected to illustrate this matter of 'style,' are Mozart and Beethoven, and again, in this pair of men of true genius, and nearly contemporary, we find the one totally different to the other, though both are of the highest perfection in their art.

Mozart should be played with supreme grace, with little resonance, but with evenness, and especially with a marked delight in every sort of ornament of the phrase. He writes in tranquil keys —but he has chromatic embellishments of incomparable sweetness and charm, and it is these

cadences which ought to be so rendered as to strike and captivate the imagination. We may apply to Mozart what has been said of exquisite natures, 'Qu'elles out plus besoin du superflu que du nécessaire' ('They require not so much the needful as the superfluous').

His musical phrases are generally simple, flowing, melodious; the didactic work in them is so pure, that one is never aware of any effort. It is as if this man of true courtesy is so unwilling to give trouble to others, he politely conceals from them that he is deeply learned in the technical part of his art. He covers with flowers the solid timbering of the edifice. Let us give new life to his thought, by rendering his graceful ideas with all the refinement of which we are capable.

I consider that musical art is of three distinctly different kinds, which came into the world in succession. First, musical science; then music, properly so called; and thirdly, poetic music. The first resembles, to my mind, a well-trimmed garden, the trees planted in rows, cut in formal shapes and figures,—the French garden, as we understand it, and set in order by Lenôtre. The next, music, properly so called, in its breadth and colour, like a beautiful landscape, a scene tranquil and mellow to the eye, and which gently lulls the mind,—there are many things, it is true, that we

are aware are moving and passing there,—but dimly discerned in the penumbra, and losing themselves in the distance. Then the third, poetic music, resembles the great pageants of nature, the lofty mountains, the vast, ever-moving ocean,—scenes which seize upon the soul violently, and force it to find in them sympathy with the great sorrows of life ; whilst it is especially the voice, the cry itself, uttered by these sorrows.

Beethoven is a poet ; to interpret him aright, we should devote our attention to modification of the sound, and to the constant variety of the signs F and P, which are always changing, according to the meaning of the poem that we have to reproduce. For the works of Beethoven—who has unlimited power of saying all things—contain sentiments, and therefore expressions, of strongest contrast ; the performer must then be mindful that there be no resemblance between the *forte* that expresses joyousness, and that telling of despair. Another kind of tone (*sonorité*), powerful and soft at the same time, is required for his Adagios or Largos, which often have the character of organ notes. To recall the full tones of the organ, the piano should be treated as if it were elastic,—when the fingers are down upon the keys, they should be pressed again ; all the vibrations of the waves of sound should pass out,

and that the sounding-board may give sufficient resonance, there should be no hurry, no knocking of the notes, but the power of the sound developed only, as it were, after the chord has been played, so as to prolong it; the hand held close over the keys, so as to be ready to attack the next chords, and pass from one to the other, trying, by the substitution of fingers, to bind them together, without a pause in the tone of the piano.

It is important also, in playing Beethoven, that the shades of tone which he indicates should be gradually and carefully given. Thus, if a phrase be marked F and P, the change must not be made before or after, but exactly at the point where it is marked by the composer. The *crescendos* and the *diminuendos* ought to be graduated, and the progression of the sound well sustained. At other times, contrasts of loud or soft are required, and the change must be more sudden. Beethoven wrote down with the greatest care his directions for the shades of tone; it behoves us, therefore, to be very exact in reproducing them.

But it is particularly useful to create for ourselves a poem in our thought, adapted to the work we would perform, which may grasp our attention, carry us away, and make us forget that it is written down in notes. This poetic idea should be distinct, forcible, and the instrumentalist have capacity

enough to be able to forget the instrument, and be occupied only with what has to be said. But, above all things, there *must be something to say;* and it will suffice to have studied the life and mind of Beethoven, and to have meditated thereupon, for us to find the fitting words, and the power of uttering them.

CHAPTER II.

'SUPPLENESS.

IT will have been evident to such of my readers as have faithfully followed what has been said throughout this work,—that the Pianist, who wishes to become truly the Artist, has a long training to go through. In fact, when he has conquered the mechanical part, by labour which is purely material, and which tends to give flexibility to the muscles ; when the scales, arpeggios, trills and octaves, and double notes, and in a word, when every difficulty has been surmounted, and he is at his ease with regard to every kind of ornament, then he sees rise up before him the vast mass of master-pieces, bequeathed to us by the composers of past times.

The piano is, in this way, the richest of all instruments, for our predecessors wrote largely for it, and entrusted to it the best efforts of their genius and of their mind. Their instrument was the intimate confidante of each of these lofty, these privi-

leged spirits, and therefore is it, that, through it, they can live again for us so completely. The study of it also is of such high interest, that the artist finds in it immediate reward for his labour.

In truth, the literature of music disturbs not the ashes of the dead ('Ne remue pas de cendres).' It is not the ghost of the past which is here brought before you. Music is vital. It is the great, the living man, who appears and reveals himself to you.

But I would advise that, in order to form the intelligence aright, you should follow the same path which music itself has traversed, and without altering the chronological order of events. You should even begin somewhat before the advent of the piano, learn something of harmony, and read the church music of the first great composers. This done, you should take an epoch, endeavour to become yourself penetrated with the general ideas of that epoch, and study the compositions of the greater part, if not of all, the masters of that time. When the fingers, obeying the mind which guides them, have acquired the manner of the style of each composer, you take the following epoch, and thus, while you pass through the various modifications of expression in the art, which it has gone through, during the different periods of past times, profiting meanwhile by

deep study of the progress made in the manner of using the instrument, and arriving at the present epoch, when the piano appears to have opened up all its secrets,—you attain at last to the position of being an artist; for the intelligence is enriched, is strong, and to be depended on, and it is *supple* also. I emphasise designedly the word *supple*, for to be truly an artist of interpretation, one must, before all things, have suppleness—pliancy of mind; one must be able to spring out of one's-self, and plunge into the spirits of these so diverse poets of sound. No doubt, the artist-interpreter will have stronger sympathies —nearer affinities with some than with others, but he cannot, *ought* not to possess too powerful an originality. The creative genius, the composer, possesses this originality. It is he who finds new methods, new accents hitherto unknown, and this is the reason that, so often, men of genius do not understand one another—why they attack each other furiously and criticise one another with bitterness and rancour. *They* cannot be pliant,—they who have each their special manner of feeling; and it is precisely this individuality, vibrating through their being, which constitutes their power, their greatness, their sublime remoteness from all approach. But the interpreter needs different qualities, and, in order to acquire these, he

needs a long study of all that has been thought and written on his subject, up to the present day. With him his own personality must almost disappear; his most ardent wish, his greatest glory, must be to see his listeners moved, carried away by the grief or the joy he represents, and by their admiration of the composer whom he interprets to them—be it a Chopin, Beethoven, or a Mozart, and forgetful altogether of himself, who from the grave has called the great one forth, all radiant with undying fame!

I think I need hardly say that to become the artist-interpreter, however, you should be endowed by Heaven with special gifts.

And yet it is my opinion that every one without exception might play the piano well, provided proportions are just, and the hand well formed. A good master is requisite to direct the preliminary studies, in a proper manner, and, above all things, to lay the foundation for good fingering. Then, from two to four hours a day are desirable for practising exercises, which are simply gymnastics. The study of the piano is not so difficult as is generally supposed. The form of the hand does not present any great difficulty for carrying out these gymnastics. Almost always it is bad teaching that occasions so many difficulties. It is, in truth, a very rare thing (and I cannot quite under-

stand why it is so), it is very rare to find the hand well held, or that the joint, from which it moves, is in the right place (at the knuckles of the hand). But to sum up; the whole difficulty lies in procuring suppleness, by strengthening two small sinews which connect the fingers, the one between the two first fingers, the other uniting the other three. The third finger is generally weak, because bound in between the other two. It is necessary, therefore, to make it rather more independent, which is easily done as the sinews become flexible —though these must not be overstrained by too violent exercise—that there may be no tendency to stiffness or inflammation. If, however, the teacher well knows his duty towards his pupil, the fingers will very quickly learn to be clever. It is the same with the wrist. I am surprised to find that the important matter of fingering is also much neglected, and these neglects often occasion that the long practisings to attain execution on the piano, prove fruitless. And yet it would seem so simple a thing to keep the hands naturally held, as nature indicates, without contortion; to watch attentively 'whence we are coming and whither we are going'—two terms which contain all the science of fingering, and to hold the hands ready to carry out these directions.

But, alas! pupils are, as a rule, in the beginning,

placed under the direction of ignorant teachers. 'Oh! later on,' it is said, 'when my daughter is more advanced, I will give her a good master!' without suspecting that it is the poor daughter who will cruelly suffer from this great mistake. When this child, after years of fruitless labour, comes to the real master, she has to begin everything afresh, and much more distressingly than at first, as she has to rid herself of bad habits, which is a far more difficult matter than to form good ones; and then weariness and discouragement often unite to crush hopelessly an intelligence which might have been capable of something good.

But, as I have said before, provided the studies are well directed, every one may learn to play, and to play well, as regards the technical part of execution on the piano.

When you come to the study of the Art itself it is quite another thing; and here, as well for the interpreter as for the composer, we require natural *gift*. Not so much in degree, certainly, is it needed for the one as for the other; but then, how great is the difference in the fate of these two. The one writes, and the generations who follow him pass the text from hand to hand, vieing with one another in the worship of the Immortal. The interpreter who teaches to these

generations what that text is, and what it means, who brings the genius again to life, by mingling his own life with that of the Great Departed, who, by the touch of his own intelligence, galvanises what without him were indeed dead,—this interpreter has but a few hours of existence; and when these hours, few and short, are gone by, oblivion, entire, complete, is all his destiny. Of those two that have been one for that short hour, it is the interpreter who survives not—he is the dead one; the other lives yet, and for ever.

THE CONCLUSION.

I NOW come to the end of my work, in which I trust to have been successful in setting forth my own conviction that the Art of Music is not only a means, but the highest and the most intimate means, of expressing the emotions; and that one cannot become a true artist without being also, in some degree, a philosopher,—and, as a student of the history of mankind, able to render an account of the successive phases of feeling through which humanity has passed. I hope also to have shown that if the means of execution, the mechanical part, ought to be so thorough, that no combinations, however difficult, can occur which it is unable to surmount, yet that this mechanical part should never be the principal aim in view, for the artist must be superior to the vulgar triumph of the acrobat. Let him be content to climb Jacob's ladder upward towards the Infinite, but let him not care to excite greater astonishment in the lookers-on, by pretending that he can walk up it on his head!

I hope, too, the rapid sketch I have given of the history of music, in the lives of its creators—its masters, has proved that, though differing in their methods, as in their aspirations, yet each one of these geniuses commands our admiration, our respect, our affection; and that to confine our approval to one school—to be proud of belonging only to one particular manner of expression, as by this or that composer, is like glorying in a weakness, or, to say the least, in a narrowness of mind. Doubtless, we each have sympathies and special affinities—each of us is the more deeply moved, when interpreting or listening to the composer who is in harmony with our thought. Somewhat, as in conversation with a beloved friend, we find his expressions more correct, clearer, more vigorous, in a word, truer, than when we speak with a person to whom we are indifferent. The same language, even the same words, have quite a different effect on us, in the two cases. And it is the same with the emotions excited by music.

We are aware that, by the laws of physics, if you utter a cry, the musical instrument at hand will give the note corresponding to that cry, the string will vibrate strongly, whilst all the other strings will remain mute. In the same way, if the composer touch a chord in unison with your feeling, you vibrate in response. But our understanding should

prove to us, that outside ourselves, such vibrations are ever being produced, and that those who are exciting them in other persons, are just as great, as true, and as deserving of admiration, as the one who affects ourselves.

Then let us force ourselves to increase the number of the harmonies that we respond to, by a deeper knowledge of the laws which belong to the Beautiful and the True. And further, let us endeavour to penetrate by sympathy into these diverse spirits, listening, as teachable children to instruction, to what they have to tell, setting all systematic opposition on one side, and trying to gather every flower in our path, rejecting none.

We should remember the lively repartee of Auber, who was a man of wit as well as of genius, to one who was speaking in his presence of music. After dilating on his own partialities, he ventured so far as to remark, 'I dislike Mozart!'

'I can hardly say, "So much the worse for Mozart," can I?' quoth Auber, with his cunning smile.

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